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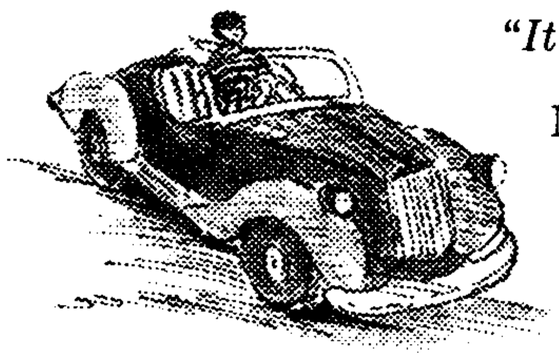
Friday
6 Feb. '93

MAJOR'S WAR ON CRIME

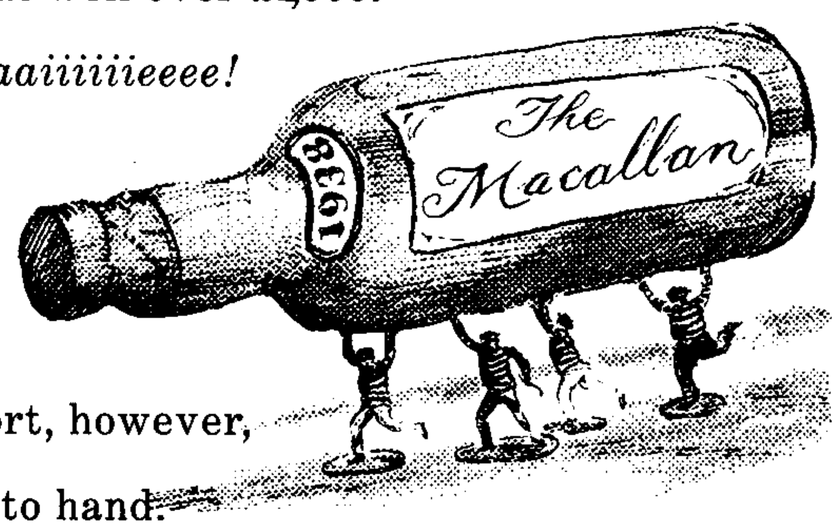
Toy car thieves scarper with Macallan



"It tore at my guts," said MR SPELLACY of Paisley, when thieves stole his priceless collection of miniature automobiles.

But even worse was the discovery that the felons had made off with a bottle of 1938 The Macallan Malt Whisky valued currently at well over £1,000.

Aaaiiiiieeee!



Comfort, however, was to hand.

A bottle of The Macallan 18 year old (purchased for £32 at the off-licence) with its golden treasury of sherry notes (acquired from ageing exclusively in oaken sherry butts) restored equanimity.

"I just hope the '38 falls into the hands of a respectable collector," he said at last.

"But if I find they've drunk it, I'll give'em BUTTS ~ and it won't be sherry ones."

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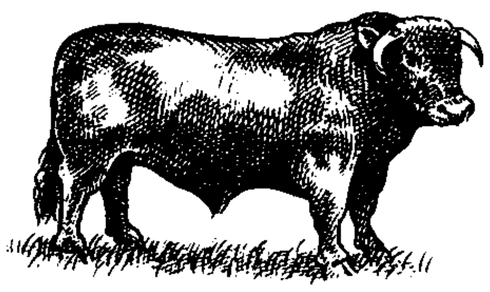

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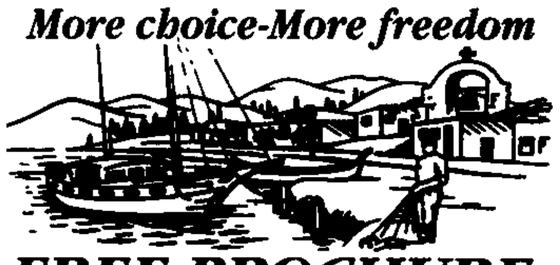

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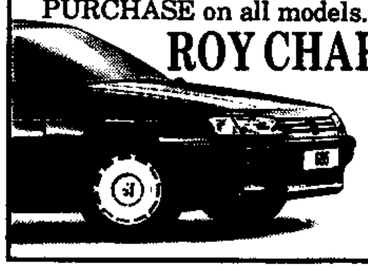

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Gnome

AS CHAIRMAN of the Gnome Bank, I have been extremely worried by the recent changes of personnel at the *Daily Mirror*. As co-owner of the *Mirror*, with a number of other leading banks, the Gnome Bank feels a great responsibility to the fine traditions of this historic newspaper.

The removal of Mr Alastair Creep from his position as Deputy Assistant Political Night Editor and the engagement of Mr David Toady in the role of Assistant Political Deputy Editor (Night) is an extraordinarily controversial move. No wonder the House of Commons has debated little else this week and that all the country's newspapers have devoted most of their pages to covering the story in depth.

I must therefore do my best to allay the national sense of shock and foreboding over this extraordinary event by making an unequivocal statement on behalf of the Bank that I own.

I believe it is vital for the *Mirror* to retain its stance as a left-wing newspaper with a firm commitment to the Labour Party. The *Mirror* must remain a socialist publication with a commitment to trade unionism, nationalisation, interventionism, increased taxation for the rich, restrictions on movement of capital and redistribution of wealth.

It must above all continue to sell large numbers of copies to the sort of deluded proles who believe this sort of garbage and then maybe I'll get back some of the money back that I lent to the fat crook who used to own it.

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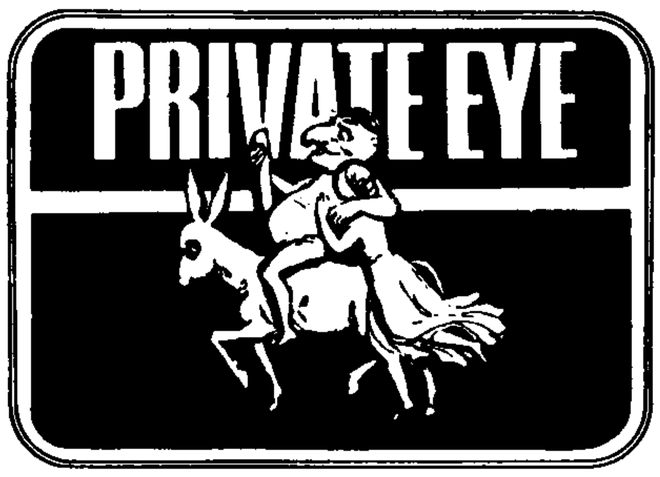


COLOUR SECTION

A SCANDAL of Matrix Churchill proportions looms over the ministry of defence. It involves the chartering of support ships during the Gulf war.

The allegation that a "ring" of charterers had a "hold" on certain senior MoD officials has been circulating for some time, details of which have been published mainly in the shipping newspaper *Lloyds List*.

The allegations have been given some force by figures recently released by Archie Hamilton, the accident-prone defence minister of state. He revealed that of 162 vessels used in support of the British contribution to Operation Desert Storm, mainly moving men and equipment, only five were flagged in Britain.

This was not just because of government policy to "flag out" ships so they do not have to conform to decent safety standards or employ trade unionists. It is also because the "ring" operated almost exclusively with "flagged-out" ships and managed to keep a lot of the more decent operators out of the lucrative market in the Gulf.

In a written answer on 1 February, Hamilton conceded that MoD police had completed a long investigation into fraud in chartering vessels for the Gulf war and had sent the papers to the crown prosecution service (CPS) on 6 November. "Further comment," he said in his usual forthright style, "would not be appropriate at this time."

One reason is that many names in the MoD police submission to the CPS bear a striking resemblance to the names of those accused (and usually acquitted) of breaking the arms embargo to Iraq. In other words, the same people using MoD officials to help break their own embargo were the first to profit when the arms they had sold were turned on Britain.

NOW the last Guinness trial is over — with the acquittal of Thomas Ward, who still has to pay back a lot of the £5 million "sweetener" he was paid by order of Ernest Saunders without his board's approval — the way is clear for the long-awaited department of trade report on the Guinness affair to be published.

Written by Henry Brooke, son of the former home secretary of the same name and now Mr Justice Brooke, the report might help to explain why some people were tried for taking part in the Guinness "share support" operation and others weren't.

The mystery of Ephraim Margulies, the sugar king, has already been mentioned in this regard. But there may be others, even more interesting, and the suspense is now almost unbearable. No doubt details of the report, when published, will be widely disseminated in large-circulation newspapers such as the *Daily Express* and the *Daily Star*.

IT LOOKS as if Robert "Gillette" Horton, the sacked chairman of BP, has fallen on his nose again.

His job as chairman-designate of Railtrack, the government's seventh new rail quango, is already threatened by the attitude of prospective bidders for rail services (or "franchises" in railspeak).

They have made it clear that unless they are allowed to own and control their track and signalling etc, they will not apply for franchises. This means that as the number of franchises increases, Railtrack's role will diminish — just like BR's, as its train services are turned into private franchises. There isn't much point in setting up Railtrack as a separate quango. If it is doomed to extinction, it might as well operate as part of the equally doomed BR.

There should be just enough time to give Horton his promised K before sending him to his local Jobcentre.

IAN MAXWELL has lost his appeal against Mr Justice Chadwick's order that he broke his fiduciary duty to shareholders by signing away parcels of money from the *Mirror* pension fund to meet his father's pressing debts to Crédit Suisse. As the *Eye* has pointed out, the case was of special interest to others.

In this case the "others" are Ian Maxwell's fellow members of the board of Mirror Group Newspapers, which became a public company in 1991 a few months before Maxwell went for a swim. Were they, too, in breach of a fiduciary duty by being members of a board which allowed such vast sums to vanish, even if they did not personally assist the transactions?

The issue was left undecided by the court of appeal, which appeared keen to cover the whole matter up. Indeed, by inference, the court rebuked Mr Justice Chadwick (who learned a thing or two about fraud when he prosecuted in the Guinness trail) for not sticking to the narrow issue — Ian Maxwell's actual signing over of the shares. It seems that the doctrine that a director is responsible for all the terrible things which might happen to his company is a little too shocking for the City and the judges. So for the moment Sir Robert Clark, Charles Wilson, Joe Haines, etc, can breathe again.

One mystery remains. The pension company (Bishopsgate Investment Management) was represented only by a junior barrister, Mr John Brisby. Ian Maxwell could afford a senior barrister, Mr Colin Rimer QC, old school playmate of secretary of state for social security Peter Lilley, who managed to represent Maxwell while he is also conducting his department of trade inquiry into the Astra arms company (he was appointed by Lilley).

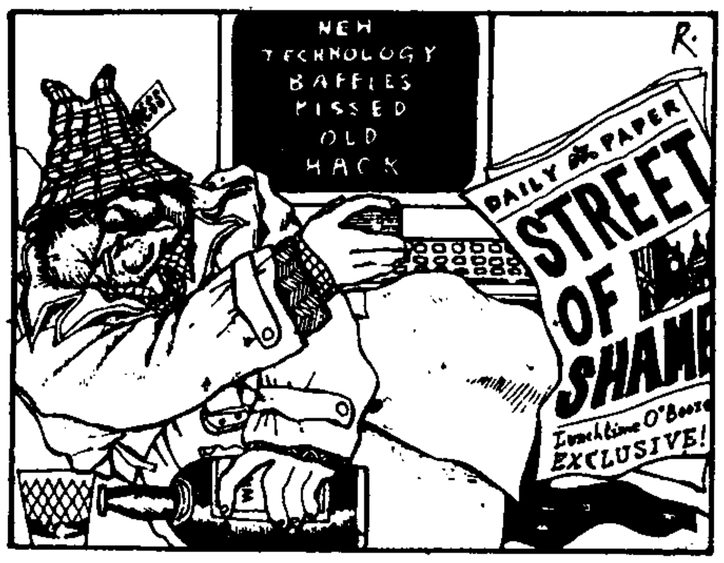
In the Maxwell case, Rimer had a junior, Paul Girolami. Rimer does not come cheap. How does Ian Maxwell afford him all the way to the court of appeal.

THE government's love affair with one of the biggest contributors to Tory party funds, Tarmac plc, continues unabated.

Young meteor Jonathan Aitken, minister for defence procurement with special responsibility for arming the dictatorship of Saudi Arabia, announced on 20 January that the ministry of defence had handed contracts to Tarmac for projects with a capital value of £4 billion.

Assuming a 5 per cent guaranteed profit (rather low by MoD standards), this would bring about £200 million into Tarmac —or five times what the government has already given it for taking over PSA Projects.

"Is it me or are criminals getting younger?"



THE DEPARTURE of Neil Kinnock's press officer Alistair Campbell from his other job as political editor of the *Daily Mirror* has generated an awful lot of tosh.

One reaction that was to be expected was the apologia on Campbell's behalf from the former Labour leader: first in the form of an early-day Commons motion; then in a windy article in the London *Evening Standard*. Nowhere in the article did Kinnock mention that Campbell's wife, Fiona Miller, has been helping Glenys Kinnock with her forthcoming book about female role models.

The issue was the appointment of David Seymour as group political editor of Mirror Group Newspapers, a post previously held by Maxwell hagiographer Joe Haines — a fact which rather makes a mockery of Campbell's claim to have been effectively demoted.

Seymour himself had worked for the Mirror Group in the early 1980s doing a similar job to Campbell. At first Seymour was Haines's creature; but he eventually found Maxwell and Haines unbearable and at the earliest opportunity jumped ship to join *Today*, while Campbell was brought back from *Today* (where he had worked in pre-Murdoch days) to become Maxwell's and Haines's poodle.

To reject working under Seymour as Campbell had done, wrote Kinnochio in the *Standard*, was to "reject servility". Yet it is hard to imagine a hack more servile than Campbell.

Under the directions of Maxwell and Haines he had joined in the attack on two MPs, the Tories' Rupert Allason and Labour's George Galloway, who had dared to criticise Maxwell in early-day motions. This ill-advised attack cost the Mirror Group £400,000 in libel damages and legal costs. In another glorious twist, Campbell's reporting of the settlement with Allason has led to further litigation.

On the day Campbell's resignation was announced, Allason issued a writ for malicious falsehood against both Campbell and Mirror Group Newspapers. It arose from Campbell's report that 50 MPs had signed a motion demanding that Allason should donate his £250,000 libel damages to unfortunate *Mirror* pensioners. On top of this, Campbell's deputy, Andy McSmith, rang the local newspaper in Allason's Torbay constituency and encouraged it to run the story on the same day as the *Mirror*. However, only seven MPs signed the early-day motion and it looked remarkably like it had been initiated by Alistair Campbell himself.

Allason has subpoenaed McSmith, the Torbay journalist and two Labour MPs, Richard Caborn and Jimmy Boyce. Caborn will say that he was approached by Campbell but declined to sponsor the motion, while Boyce was persuaded to do so on the ground that it would be doing the *Mirror* a favour. It remains to be seen whether Mirror Group will wish to defend Campbell from this slur upon his integrity.

LORD HOLLICK, the socialist millionaire, has come to detest the bright young chief executive he teamed up with to save the *Daily Mirror*, the dour Ulsterman David Montgomery. Nor is the peer at all happy with the performance of another famous Labour supporter, Sir Gordon Borrie.

Hollick proposed Borrie for the *Mirror* board against the furious opposition of Montgomery. But Sir Gordon — a former director of the office of fair trading — is so terrified of the controversy which has blown up on the board that he solves it by not appearing.

Borrie was not present at the crucial meeting on 17 February, and Hollick had to face the Ulsterman and his toadies (Sir Robert Clark, Charles Wilson, Roger Eastoe, Roger Allwood) single-handed. Hollick was utterly furious at the displacing of his friend and adviser, *Mirror* political correspondent Alastair Campbell, and swears he will not rest until Campbell is back at the *Mirror*.

Hollick's problem is that Campbell, like so many journalists sacked by Montgomery and his Rosa Kleb-style sidekick Amanda Platell, may prefer to take a job with his old friend Richard Stott, now editor of *Today*, rather than wait for the outcome of a long boardroom battle between Hollick and Montgomery.

Montgomery tells bankers and City editors (who continue to believe him because they are too lazy to find out the truth) that he is getting rid of the "dead wood" at the *Mirror*. In fact he is sacking (and paying off at huge sums) good journalists and replacing them with Toadies (the name given by *Mirror* hacks to the new executives hired because they toadied to Montgomery at *Today* newspaper).

Irvine Hunter, the *Mirror* features chief sub, and his deputy Trevor Davies, left with six months' money each, rather than work under Montgomery Toady Richard Holledge. Campbell left rather than work under Toady David Seymour. Other Toadies about to seize top positions at the *Mirror* are Jane Moore (features) and Ron Morgans (pictures), who is being offered a fantastic £90,000 a year.

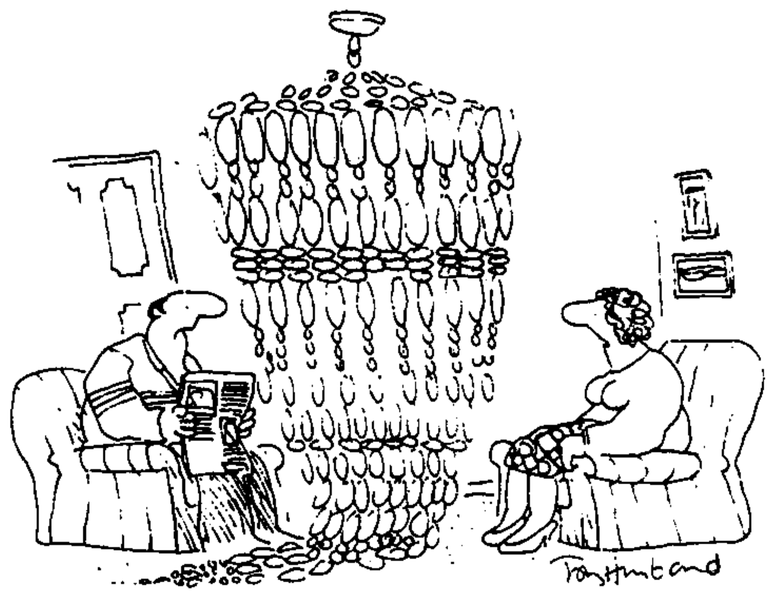
The real beneficiary of this astonishing charade is Richard Stott, the new editor of *Today*, who is delighted to be rid so cheaply of the Toadies, especially when he can exchange them for all the talent Montgomery and Platell has expensively sacked. The net result for the *Mirror* has been a greater fall in circulation than anything achieved even by Robert Maxwell.

A RECENT story in the *Financial Times* suggested that a poll by political consultants Decision Makers had shown that a majority of industrialists and local authorities backed Maastricht. But the *FT's* hack Gerald Mead had only been fed selected highlights of the survey and had not seen the full report.

Certain other findings which told *against* the government's position were in fact kept back from the *FT*.

For example, the poll found that only 16 per cent of industry and 19 per cent of local authorities believed the implications of Maastricht had been properly explained; 56 per cent of industry and local authorities thought Maastricht was a step to a federal Europe; and only 40 per cent of respondents believed ratification would increase subsidiarity. Furthermore, 51 per cent of industry thought countries should tailor interest rates to their own needs, rather than try to maintain ERM parities; and only 48 per cent were in favour of monetary union, with 42 per cent against.

Why was Decision Makers so coy about revealing all its splendid poll's findings? Certainly not because the firm counts among its directors two loyal supporters of the government — MPs Barry Porter and Dame Angela Rumbold — that's for sure.



"Don't you think a chandelier's too much for this room?"

THE TRAVAILS of the *Observer* deepen as the *Magazine* continues to soak up money — a monthly budget overspend of £40,000 last month, on top of the six-figure overspend in the previous three months.

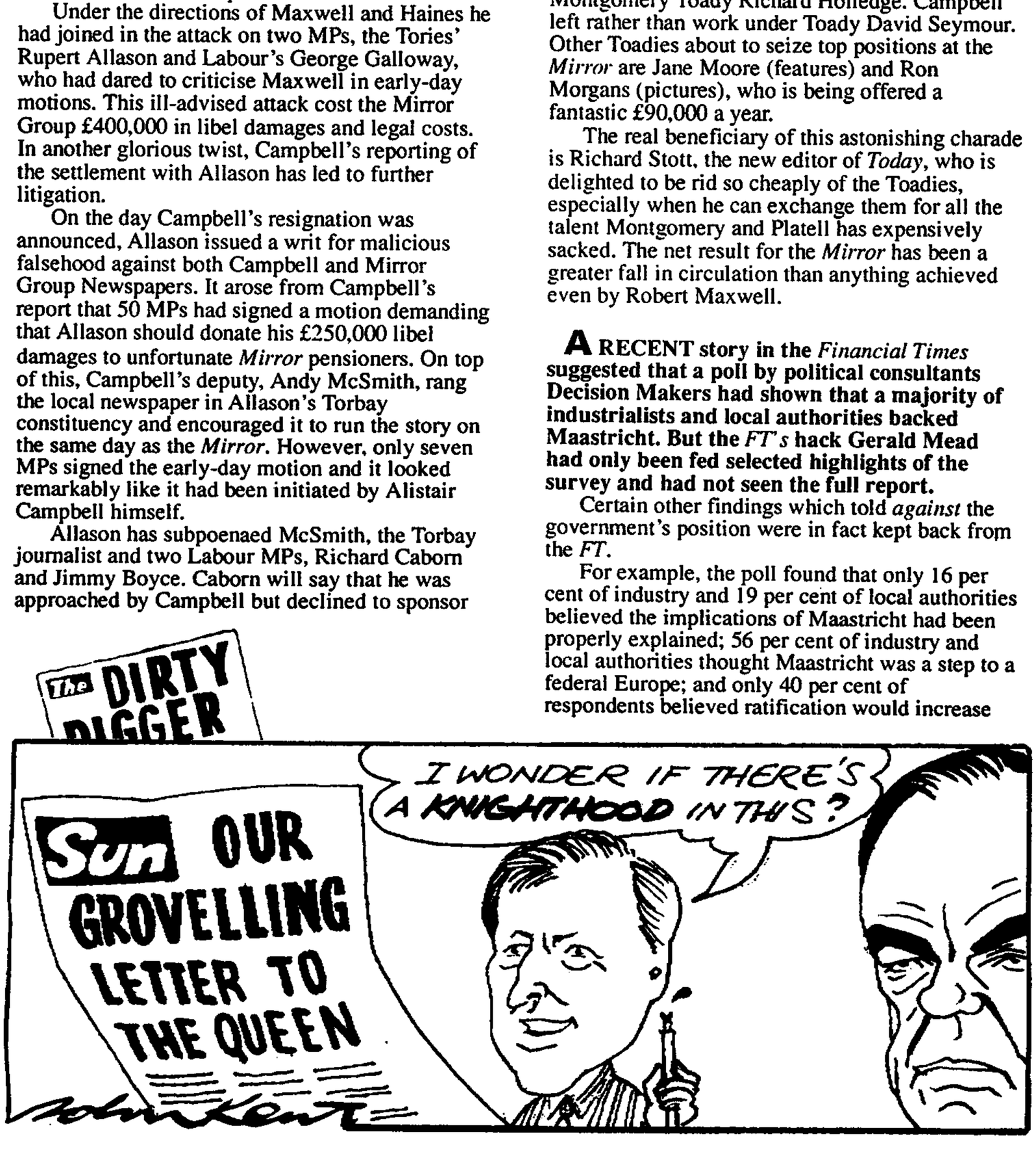
The measure of the crisis can be seen in some of the cheese-paring economies to which hacks are now subjected. Simon Hoggart, the political editor, was amazed to receive an invoice from the postroom for 24p. The postroom is now opening mail to check that it is not personal. If it is, the hack is invited to repay the amount.

Meanwhile evidence has emerged of how the editor of the *Mag*, Simon "Pussy" Kelner, commissions his writers. He recently phoned novelist and art historian Marina Warner and asked her to write a column about sex for £1,500. She declined the offer and was taken aback when Kelner called back half an hour later upping the fee to £5,000. She still declined.

EVERY DAY at the *Daily Torygraph* is a scene of anguish as education editor John Clare and his number two Paul Marston sit down alongside one another and gaze at their computer screens.

The devilishly handsome Clare arrived at the *Torygraph* four years ago, an old chum of editor Max "Hitler" Hastings. His behaviour towards education correspondent Michael Durham was so obnoxious that Durham accepted redundancy and left the paper, though not before inserting a mischievous message in the paper's education column. Reading down the left-hand margin, taking the first letter of each paragraph in an otherwise boring story about opted-out schools, a hidden message stated CLARE IS A SHIT. When it was spotted, Clare became an instant laughing stock.

Durham's replacement was Paul Marston, the third member of the team, who now also has cause to hate his boss. Invited to the christening of Marston's baby daughter, the much-married lothario Clare spent the afternoon chatting up Marston's attractive sister, who was so charmed by him that she broke off with her long-standing boyfriend the next day. Within a month, Marston's sister had married Clare, and five weeks after that Clare walked out on the marriage with the result that fists flew between the two hacks in the *Torygraph* newsroom.



Miss Georgia de Chamberet

IN OUR last issue we stated that Miss Georgia de Chamberet (inaccurately referred to as Georgia de Chambertin) was a "former paramour" of Mr Donald Trelford. We accept that this is not true and apologise unreservedly to Miss de Chamberet for the embarrassment and distress caused to her. As a mark of our regret we have agreed to pay her an appropriate sum by way of damages and costs.

DO LABOUR and the swelling ranks of Tory sceptics need to worry about the railways (destruction) bill? Perhaps not, after all: John "Brunel" MacGregor, abetted by the treasury Fat Controller, seem to be heading for a derailment.

After an unconvincing performance before the transport select committee, MacGregor's lack of knowledge and evident embarrassment were saved by a division bell. However, at the speed of a super-efficient and very comfortable French TGV, all was revealed in a written answer he despatched to an earlier question on subsidy guarantees to franchise holders.

Amazingly, the note stated that normal treasury rules would apply — and that the director of franchising would not be able to guarantee subsidies *for more than three years*.

Even the bill's most outspoken critics believe franchise operators will need a minimum of 10 or 15 years to have a chance of making a modest return on capital. Only the most foolhardy entrepreneur would take on a loss-making franchise and shell out for new trains armed with just a three-year cash commitment from the treasury.

Cynics now suggest the bill is merely a crude delaying tactic to cut railway investment and maintain the road programme. Perish the thought!

CLIMBING the greasy pole to the next stop (No 11) before his final destination (No 10), the much overrated Michael Portillo is in serious danger of being overhyped.

Jaggerlips's recent spate of brown-nosing Tory backbenchers may be a sign that he feels his hour is approaching. He still keeps in with genuine friends like David Hart, the bizarre Thatcherite PR man who won the 1984 miners' strike single-handed, and whose Suffolk mansion Portillo often visits. But to prevent hacks from learning that he is only slightly cleverer than Peter Lilley and nothing like as clever as John Redwood, Jaggerlips needs a full-time PR adviser.

Why doesn't he send for his astute former flatmate and fellow opera-lover, Hugh Bygott-Webb, who after producing the *Frank Bough Show* for Sky TV is well-versed in political affairs?

Some of Portillo's past does have to be played down. He was not exactly a success in either of his last two ministerial jobs: "solving" the poll tax problem at the DOE; creating the rail privatisation problem at the department of transport.

It was Portillo who held up desperately-needed investment in the London commuter services and then concocted an ambitious scheme to privatise the Channel tunnel rail link, which promptly went wrong. Undaunted, he fathered the crazy rail "franchising" concept, which is the basis of John MacGregor's privatisation scheme.

His attempt to save Thatcher from extinction is well-documented, and he was no more successful in extricating Cecil Parkinson from the Sarah Keays affair in 1983 when he was Cecil's political adviser. All in all, there would be plenty to keep Mr Bygott-Webb busy.

"For God's sake, Dickerson. You're living in the past"

NUM LEADER Arthur Scargill has spent the past month laying mercilessly into Labour members of the Commons trade and industry select committee for agreeing to an energy report which could — depending on interpretation — save anything from 16 to all 31 pits threatened with closure.

In particular, Scargill's bitter condemnations have been directed at Mick Clapham, Labour MP for Barnsley West and a former employee of King Coal as the NUM's industrial relations officer.

Could this be the same Arthur Scargill who was less than pleased to be beaten for the nomination as Labour candidate in the seat of Barnsley West by, er, one Mick Clapham? Yes it could.

WHEN Michael Heseltine, in a speech to the Scottish branch of the Institute of Directors, attacked the dullards who are holding up economic recovery, whom was he thinking about?

Hezza said he was in favour of engineers and scientists — "people who produce" — but thought we might not have the balance right "between the teeth and the tail". Among those at the tail he named accountants. He didn't suggest they were unnecessary, "but I do want to suggest that there is more to life than financial accounts," he said.

No doubt Lord Wakeham, had he heard the speech, would have pricked up his ears. He is the best-known accountant in Parliament, and it is he who wants to stop Hezza from spending too much on a coal rescue package.

Wakeham started life learning that there was nothing more important than "financial accounts", as Hezza contemptuously calls them, and Wakeham has been the key figure in landing Hezza in his present mess by promoting the idea of closing 31 mines to make the industry attractive to private buyers.

As a former chief whip and Thatcher henchperson, Wakeham is a formidable opponent. As a former energy secretary, he is also thought to know about coal — and he will never forgive Hezza for having broken ranks. No wonder Hezza thinks the day of the accountant should be ended.

IT'S BEEN trebles all round at the Hare and Hounds in West Derby, Liverpool, since local MP Bob Wareing won substantial libel damages from ex-Tory party chairman Chris Patten.

Patten, who as governor of Hong Kong earns twice as much as his chum John Major and pays even less tax than the Queen (ie nowt), was foolish to dub Wareing a supporter of Militant. Just because Bob was president of Liverpool district Labour party during Derek Hatton's rise to power (1974-81), the Tories tarred him with the Militant brush.

Like many Labour stalwarts, Wareing had to suffer in silence during Militant's march to power on Murkeyside for fear of being purged. Only when Neil Kinnock got his witch-hunting roadshow together at Bournemouth in 1985, could Wareing and others safely denounce Militant as "repugnant".

Wareing is a likeable cove who does a reasonable job as a run-of-the-mill backbench MP. Now 62, when first elected he was criticised for an alleged lack of charisma; some wags unfairly comparing his public persona to that of a sponge pudding.

Bob made great efforts to inject passion into his speeches, along with the now obligatory gravitas. Unfortunately, few could take him seriously because of his distinct physical resemblance to Charlie Drake, the comedian.

Those present will never forget the occasion in the mid-1980s when, about to deliver a speech from the balcony of Liverpool town hall to striking council workers below, a member of the crowd let loose the catchphrase "Hello my darlings!" Bob had to wait for the ambulances to remove those who had injured themselves laughing at this expense before he could begin.

THE campaign by the *Eye* to draw attention to the prohibitively high treasury discount rates which deter public sector investment has finally reached the floor of the Commons.

Llew Smith, Labour MP for Blaenau Gwent, has asked Norman Lamont, the lame duck chancellor, "if he will make a statement on government policy on discount rates".

Norman Lamont may be a spent force, but

even he was not thick enough to walk into that one. He passed the question over to his chief secretary, the ultra-dry Michael Portillo.

He was only too happy to declare: "There are no plans for changes in public sector discount rates." It is now open to the chancellor to change his mind and disown his junior. Whatever happens, this one won't go away.

DASHING young company director Anthony Coombs, Tory MP for Wyre Forest, was unimpressed by the outrage expressed on his local district council at council tax rebates demanded by the government for people with second homes.

In Wyre Forest, the council reckons ordinary council taxpayers will have to find an extra £11 each to subsidise the lucky second-homers. Mr Coombs, who told the local press it would be "unfair" for second homeowners to have to pay for services they did not get all the year round, lives in salubrious Solihull in the West Midlands... and has another lovely home in Kidderminster (Wyre Forest).

'Backbiter'

UNIVERSITY NEWS

AN UNUSUAL memo has been winging its way around scandal-ridden Manchester university.

The memo, purporting to be from Garth Roberts, the university's director of finance, asks for an "urgent manual cheque for the sum of £12,500" to be made to Manchester law firm Pannone and Partners, "being settlement of all claims against the university".

Underneath the instruction a handwritten message reads: "Garth, we would not accept this from anyone else. Please supply back-up papers. Thanks, Diane." ("Diane" is believed to be Diane Berry, one of Roberts's underlings.)

Eye readers will recall how last year university vice (*sic*) chancellor Professor Martyn Harris, was caught by Inspector Knacker discussing Ugandan further education policy in red-light Whalley Range. Although Harris was charged with kerb-crawling, minutes before he was due to appear before the bench the case was dropped on the grounds that he might take his life if convicted.

According to the university's public relations chief Phillip Radcliffe, the memo is open for anyone to see and has been approved by the university's auditors. Radcliffe won't say who the payment is for, however, and why it has gone through such unusual channels.

By coincidence, Pannone and Partners is the same law firm that Harris used to defend him against the charge of alleged kerb-crawling.

Maurice Barnfather

IN THE last issue dated 12 February 1993 we published a story which alleged that Lord Hollick's publicist, Maurice Barnfather of Barnfather Associates, had passed to the *Sunday Times* and *The Independent on Sunday* the inaccurate story that Lord Hollick intended to take control of Mirror Group Newspapers. We also stated that a subsequent board meeting of MGN had disowned Mr Barnfather.

We now accept that there was no foundation for these allegations; we wish to make it clear that neither Mr Barnfather nor his company Barnfather Associates Limited were the source of the inaccurate story and accept that Mr Barnfather continues to retain the support and confidence of his client, Lord Hollick.

We apologise unreservedly to Mr Barnfather and sincerely regret any distress and embarrassment caused.

Grovel

TO THE SAVOY for the annual *What the Papers Say* awards, where I am seated next to *Sun* editor Kelvin McKenzie. He is on splendidly yobbish form. Fresh from grovelling to Brenda and signing a cheque for £200,000, he still manages to raise his glass and join in the Loyal Toast, shouting: "The Queen!"

Then, looking across to the next table where gargantuan *Daily Mirror* editor Dave Banks is sitting next to Steve "Beardie" Platt, the editor of *New Statesman and Society*, he yells: "Oi! Banksy! What you doin', then? Learnin' about socialism?" Then, pointing out newsreader Anna Ford, he observes: "That BBC girl's scrubbed up well, 'asn't she?"

Kelvin tells me that the late Bubbles Rothermere's clairvoyant tarot reader has been hawking some embarrassing letters from milady around the papers. These contain curses and invocations not only against Lord Rothermere's long-standing Korean mistress, but also against Bubbles's daughter-in-law. For once Kelvin has done the decent thing and passed on the letters.

He also explains the provenance of News International chief executive Andrew Knight's nickname, Chauncey Gardner, after the Peter Sellers character in the film *Being There*. Chauncey rises to high office because everyone around him assumes his opaque, vacuous utterances to be tokens of supreme wisdom. Kelvin gives an example:

Kelvin: Andrew, what do you think we should do about this business with the Queen's Christmas broadcast, then?

Knight: Well... what do you think?

Kelvin: I think we should give her a pile of wonga and apolgise.

Knight: There you have it.

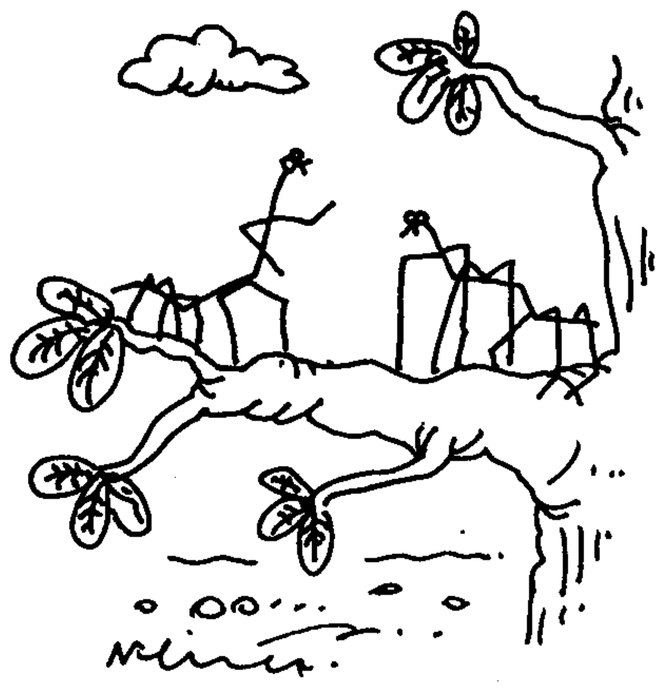
Kelvin's jollity is interrupted by a breathtakingly inept speech from Granada chief executive Charles Allen, a former caterer, who refers to the ancient Roman satirist Juvenal as "Juvenile" and even calls the late great journalist Brian Inglis, Bill Ingles.

The speech by Lord McGregor of Durris, head of the Press Complaints Commission, includes a spirited defence of the PCC but gets limp applause from the hacks. Kelvin is not impressed, and in the middle of the speech decides to tell a joke. "What do you get if you cross a Millwall supporter with a Jehovah's Witness? Someone who knocks at the door and tells you to fuck off, of course."

I relish the embarrassing moment that follows when McGregor of Dullness gives Andrew Morton an award for his royal marriage scoop of the year. This is one in the eye for the old buffer McGregor — he of the "dabbling in the stuff of other men's souls" speech — and also for the young buffer, Charles Moore, and the rest of the *Telegraph* Gussetts. Rather than clap when Morton is awarded, Moore sits on his hands, whilst the New Britons applaud the pride of the Murdoch stable.

SHARON RING

I APOLOGISED this week in the high court to Sharon Ring for the unfounded remarks I made about her in this column on 4 December 1992. I have also paid her an appropriate sum by way of damages and costs.



"I wanted to be a super-model but I was too fat"

I GATHER Rory Knight-Bruce, the master of foxhounds who edits the Londoner's Diary in the *Evening Standard*, has been humiliated by Tom Bantock, manager of Blacks, a new Soho club for decadent bohemians.

Knight-Bruce recently deputed his assistant, Davina Blewitt, to ring up Bantock and ask how Knight-Bruce should apply for membership. Since Londoner's Diary had once published an item suggesting that Bantock, previously manager of the restaurant Andrew Edmunds, had been responsible for the defenestration of a man, who had subsequently died, from the flat above, Bantock did not feel disposed to be charitable. He said Knight-Bruce would not be welcome in the club.

Undeterred and evidently desperate, Knight-Bruce instructed another of his hacks to ring Bantock and plead with him on Knight-Bruce's behalf. Again, it was to no avail.

● *THERE is obviously a great deal of trouble in store for Graham Lord's biography of John Le Carré (see Eye 811). I receive a letter this week from the distinguished firm of Rubinstein, Callingham, Polden & Gale who act for the former Mrs Susan Kennaway.*

They inform me that she categorically denies that there was ever any "three-in-a-bed relationship" between Le Carré, James Kennaway and herself, and that, to the best of her knowledge, there was never any "semi-homosexual relationship" between Le Carré and James Kennaway. Of course I am sure she is right, but it's all getting very exciting and I can't wait to see what Lord comes up with.

"Poor Yorick. No, Inspector, I didn't know him that well at all!"

Pip Pip!

Pseuds Corner

Breakfast, always with a bright cloth and flowers (this morning there were snowdrops, hyacinths and catkins), is eaten at the stately time of between half past eight and nine. We munch our way through a rich and rare variety of breads, bought from as far apart as County Cork and Aberdeen...

LUCINDA LAMBTON
Radio Times

Just the way he [Bob Dylan] moves his left leg is worth more than the complete works of Anthony Burgess.

MICHAEL GRAY
Daily Telegraph

...The exchanges at lunch can be a potent brew, with recollections of the lasciviousness of Lyndon Johnson in Manila intermingling with tales of the lechery of the 18th-century Bishop of Derry, who made love to every woman he knew. With such stories as Eisenhower telling Perry that the first baby born in America was called Peregrine, versus the excitement of Blondin, on a tightrope, pushing his manager in a wheelbarrow across Niagara Falls, it is a merry mix of words...

LUCINDA LAMBTON
Radio Times

Hamlet has no 'essence' of being whatsoever, no inner sanctum to be safeguarded: he is pure deferral and diffusion, a hollow void which offers nothing determinate to be known. His 'self' consists simply in the range of gestures with which he resists available definitions, not in a radical alternative beyond their reach. It is thus wholly parasitic on the positions it refuses: like Iago he is not what he is, but whereas for Iago this means preserving a secret identity apart from public show, Hamlet's jealous sense of unique selfhood is no more than the negation of anything in particular. How could it be otherwise, when he rejects the signifiers by which alone the self, as signified, comes into its determinacy?

TERRY EAGLETON
Programme: Hamlet at the Barbican

...Perry's surprise for me at Christmas (along with an exquisite model of an 18th-century building, for cultural counterbalance) was to enable me, at the flick of a switch, to bring America's pundits into the room. I gaze at them with all the amazement and wonder that Jane Austen would surely feel at being able to tune into the New World in this way.

Tea is the richest of rituals, with crumpets and Gentleman's Relish, biscuits and cake. Perry's Darjeeling is brewed in a china Christmas pudding, my mango tea is poured from a china iced bun, helping to refresh us for three more heady hours of music, work and American wisdom.

LUCINDA LAMBTON
Radio Times

CONTRIBUTORS: Tony Kendle, Colin Appleby, H.M. Saiewitz.

£10 paid for entries

NOOKS and CORNERS

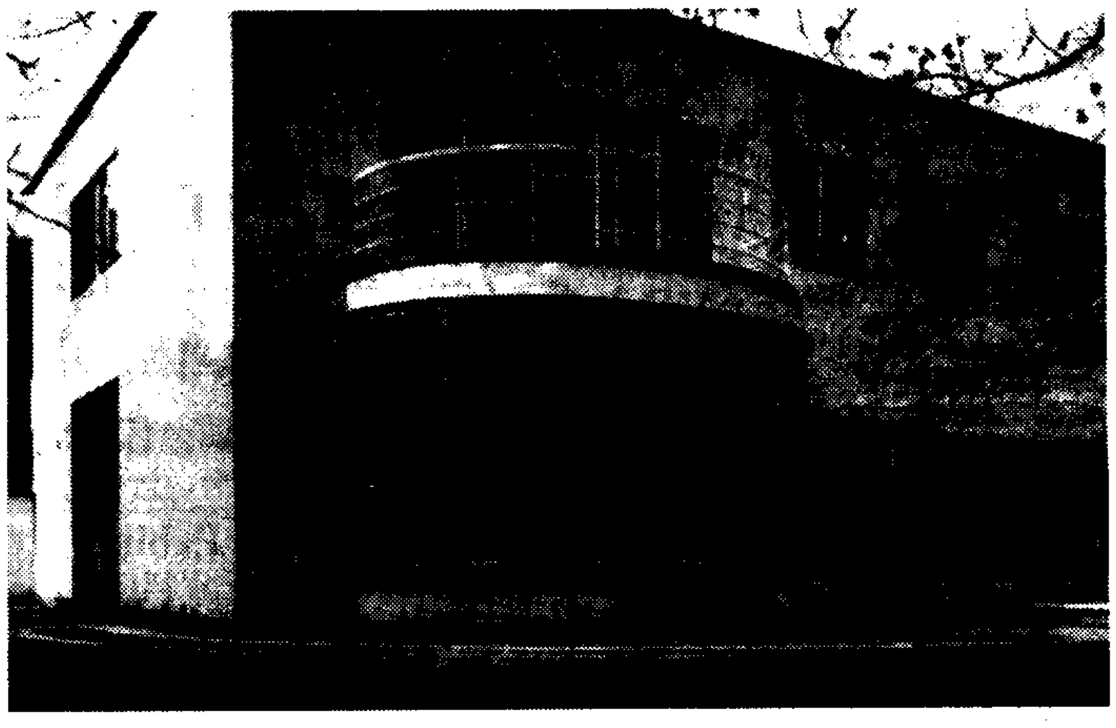
THOUGHT for the month: never have a film crew in your house, and never trust anybody with "de" in his or her name.

Groombridge Place in deepest Kent, near the Sussex border, is one of the loveliest houses in England: a gentlemanly brick moated 17th century house built on the site of a medieval castle — listed grade I. Although visible from the road in its exquisite pastoral setting and known to country house buffs, this magical house remained somehow secret and inviolate — and so unvulgarised. Until, that is, the pretentious film director Peter Greenaway used it as set for his essay in cinematographic pseudery, *The Draughtsman's Contract*. Now, alas, Groombridge Place is famous. And what is famous can be profitable.

Last September the contents of the house were sold. The house itself is now owned by someone with the unlikely name of Mark Andrew de Candole, or, rather, by his company Blenheim Asset Management. Mr de Candole used to run Citygate Properties until it was sold in 1990. He made his pile as a property developer, but he simply *loves* Groombridge Place.

Indeed, he wants to create an exhibition about its fascinating history. A pity, then, that Mr de Candole neglected to buy the Packer portraits at the Sotheby's sale, for they have now left the house for the first time in 300 years. It also seems an oversight that this (presumably) wealthy man did not acquire anything else at the sale, for the house is now devoid of furniture.

Never mind: to cherish great architecture requires sacrifices — and the sacrifice Mr de Candole proposes to make is to form a car park for 200 cars and coaches in the photogenic park, together with a new access road. This will all serve a proposed "pleasure centre" which promises to attract some 96,000 visitors a year and generate many more car movements in the tourist season in a small and quiet (and beautiful) village. Oddly, the villagers are not impressed by Mr de Candole's sacrifice; nor are English Heritage and the East Sussex Highways Department.



In the end, perhaps there can be no effective legislation to protect what is left in England that is beautiful and special from the contemptible residue of the Thatcherite era who still have some money left; but we can complain, protest, abuse and, if we are lucky, they might go away.

By a strange twist of fate many of these wretches have a "de" in their names. Andrew *de* Candole; Peter *de* Savary — the destroyer of Littlecote (among many other things). And then Antonia *de* Sancha! Perhaps her crime is greatest, for thanks to her we now have to endure the upwardly mobile tastes of David Mellor broadcast constantly on the radio and in print — the man who, when secretary of state for the environment, gave away Pitchford Hall in a vain attempt to save his repulsive political skin (*Eyes passim*). If Greenaway had used Pitchford for a film, ignorant Mellor might have realised it was remarkable, and so might have acted to save it. But a world in which people like Mellor are government ministers is a world in which men like Mark Andrew de Candole can do what they want.

I DO NOT illustrate Groombridge as it is now too famous. Instead I show No 64 Old Church Street in Chelsea, the latest project of Sir Norman de Foster.

I have referred to this before (Eye 812); what needs comment now is not that Norm thinks he is greater than Eric(h) Mendelsohn (yes, he was German, from East Prussia) or that craven architectural journalists and others are now so blinded by Foster's inflated reputation that they will not dare to criticise the golden boy from Manchester. It is that approval of the plans has been railroaded through.

Would they have been if the architect were not Sir Norman, and the clients not the influential and wealthy publishers (and benefactors) Mr and Mrs Paul de Hamlyn?

The proposal to make additions and alterations to one of the finest 20th century houses in Britain was passed on the nod by Kensington and Chelsea council, despite strong opposition from the Chelsea Society, the Twentieth Century Society and the international conservation body DOCOMOMO (Documentation of the Modern Movement).

Originally, English Heritage was also opposed; but then orders came down from on high to lay off. Naturally, the fact that the chairman is a very old friend of the de Hamlyns is neither here nor there. Just as Lord de Sainsbury cannot possibly have had a word in the ear of Jocelyn de Stevens CVO before the intrepid chairman flew over the former (tiresomely listed) Gilbey's factory in Harlow, whose site Sainsbury's want for a supermarket, prior to stating that English Heritage would not fight a public inquiry in its defence.

But it is cheering that establishment bullies do not always have it their own way. The latest issue of Scan, English Heritage's in-house mag, reports that the London advisory committee approved Stevens's controversial proposals for undermining English Heritage's powers to protect historic buildings in London (Eyes passim). In fact, the committee rejected these idiotic plans, but the magazine went to press the morning before the meeting. Oh dear: who could have imagined that anyone would stand up to Piranha de Teeth?

'Piloti'

POLICE 5

HOW FAR does the arm of the law against copyright infringement stretch? The question is much on the mind of Peter Rafferty, an antique dealer in West Hampstead, who has submitted one of the first formal complaints about the Met to its new commissioner, Paul Condon.

Last year Mr Rafferty became peripherally involved in a scam to sell pirate copies of photos from Madonna's lavishly tooled book *Sex*. Having seen prints of the photos, he offered a number of national newspapers the opportunity to scoop the massively hyped volume by publishing exclusive previews of the dirtiest pics.

Subsequently Mr Rafferty was contacted by a Mr Gary White, who claimed to represent an unnamed Danish porn magazine. The two met at a Holiday Inn, where Rafferty soon twigged that Mr White was an envoy from Inspector Knacker, and drew the meeting to a hasty close.

Within a few days Rafferty's shop was visited by Knacker, who didn't mince his words: "Give us the fucking photos," he demanded, explaining that he had come to "put the frighteners" on him as "a favour" for the FBI. Mr Rafferty attempted to persuade Knacker that he did not have the photos. At one point he was told he ought to be grateful Knacker had not "smashed the place up" or "upset" his customers. Mr Rafferty was not overwhelmed with gratitude.

Although the police report concluded that "no crime had been committed", Madonna's lawyers were later to claim in court that Rafferty had been arrested. The pirate prints were never recovered — but they were never published either, presumably because "the frighteners" had also been put on potential buyers.

Why was the Met so keen to protect the copyright of a publication for which it was shortly to get acres of free publicity by requesting that the DPP ban it? What are officers doing doling out "favours" like this to the FBI? And how much did the overstretched force spend on "Mr White's" Holiday Inn expenses and the rest of the charade? Only Mr Condon can tell us.

Terry, once described as "God's architect", said: "There should be nothing contentious about this, but as always the Victorian Society don't move with the times.

Building Design

"The self-hanging portrait — you're a genius, da Vinci!"

EYE TV

Watchdog
(BBC1)
The Cook Report
(ITV)

IT'S A pity the people of the Middle Ages didn't have television. The charlatan problem could have been halved as weeping and penniless peasants tuned in to see and hear two reassuring nobles.

"This week," John Ftapleton (for it would be he) would say, "we tackle the worrying problem of elixirs." A woman beside him, Lynn Ffaulds-Wood, looking gloomy, would add: "Yes. The Ethelreds of Lower Saxony bought some dung tablets from a Doctor Longlife in the marketplace. Mr Ethelred had been suffering from buboes. They were told that the dung tablets — on which they spent their last groat — would cure him." Ftapleton takes over again: "In fact, Mr Ethelred died next day." Lynn again: "When they went back to the market, the so-called 'Doctor' had moved on to another town."

And, if *Watchdog* didn't work, the Ethelreds could always try another programme, in which a Friar Tuck lookalike chased to that next town and confronted the "Doctor" as he laid out his dung tablets on the stall again: "So, 'Doctor Longlife', or should I say Freddie the Peasant, you're going to try to sell your elixir to another group of credulous townspeople. But those tablets are just horse dung, aren't they?... bows and arrows aren't answers, 'Doctor'... put that slingshot away... Aaaaaaargh!"

But the Britons of the Middle Ages didn't need such programmes. They had their faith in a God who organised and accounted for everything. The Britons of the late 20th century, lacking such spiritual certainty, put their faith in *Watchdog* and *The Cook Report*. But it is false comfort.

Watchdog, for example, is a paradox, in that everything about it exudes commonsense — Faulds-Wood and Stapleton, the real-life-married co-hosts, actually frown and cluck their tongues as if the viewers were their children — except that it is for people who don't have any. Last week's show, for example, included an item on unfortunate people who had answered a newspaper advertisement promising to double their money. Well, blow me down. You mean they didn't get their money doubled? You mean they lost even the money they'd sent?

Recently — in what must be the apotheosis of such fusspot shows — the studio held a semi-circle of bandaged victims of the Pop Tart, a breakfast snack. Sounds tasty, John? Yes, Lynn. But use a higher toaster setting than the packet recommends and your kiddies could be scalded. Well, yes. But fail to defrost frozen food and you might get salmonella. Take more than the specified dose of Paracetamol and you might kill yourself. Or — even beyond actions over which you have control — a brick might hit you as you walk down the street.

Watchdog preaches that all accidents are avoidable: an obvious falsehood in the modern world. If Faulds-Wood and Stapleton ever made a film of Graham Greene's short story *A Shocking Accident* — in which a man is killed by a falling pig — it would become not a tale of the daily possibility of strange catastrophe but an indictment of the failure of pork butchers to secure their stocks.

As if to illustrate that not all mishaps are avoidable, at the end of last week's edition Stapleton accidentally addressed his real-life wife as "Liz... uh, I mean, Lynn," the first known incidence in a husband-and-wife TV team of a common marital accident. Square Eyes thinks Lynn should have a *Watchdog* "Special Investigation" pronto.

If you were shocked by what a Pop Tart could do in the wrong hands, *The Cook Report* set out to illustrate what two sticks of dynamite could do if they fell into the wrong hands. To do this, the programme bought a disused railway carriage, painted it in the colours of Network South East — to match as closely as possible the train the IRA narrowly failed to blow up this month — and packed it with dressmaker's mannequins. Roger Cook then placed a briefcase filled with dynamite in the middle of the carriage, retired and melodramatically pressed the plunger.

A retired bomb squad officer was then invited to walk with Cook through the wreckage. "These are bits of bodies... these are arms... there are heads lying around," the ex-cop explained. "They're not entirely realistic," lamented Cook, with an odd tone of either reassurance or regret. The presenter was then joined by a survivor of the recent Manchester IRA blast. "I hope this makes people realise that it's not a joke," he croaked. But do people think IRA bombs *are* a joke? "And this brings it all back?" checked Cook. "I'm sorry to have to put you through it..."

Really? Well, why did he do it, then? The mother of a recently murdered soldier in Northern Ireland was brought on to say, in tears: "They're scum... they've robbed me of my son — and not just of my son — of grandchildren as well..." Thus were two soft targets — that the IRA are psychopaths and that dynamite does a lot of damage in the wrong hands — resoundingly hit.

What might have been, in the greater days of ITV documentary, the programme's subject and sting — that the government and building industry declined to fund a more secure marking and storage system for dynamite — slipped away in a throwaway line.

'Square Eyes'

MEDIA NEWS

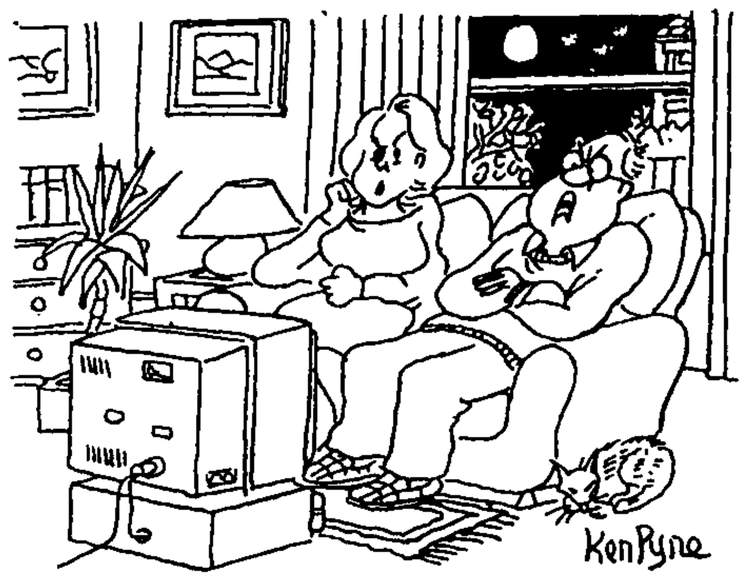
JOHN BIRT is now so mad that BBC managers have begun to refer to his plans for an "internal market" at the Beeb as Year Zero, after the efforts of Pol Pot to sweep away Cambodia's past.

The term was coined after a recent meeting Birt held with heads of department, where he rolled his eyes and talked excitedly about the need for the BBC to exist in a "culture of permanent change".

BBC COVERAGE of Coventry City's fluke 5-2 win over championship-chasing Blackburn Rovers caused much gnashing of teeth among fans of the historic city's historically unsuccessful club.

Calls complaining of anti-Coventry bias on Radio Five's coverage, broadcast on local BBC station CWR, flooded into Broadcasting House, especially after commentator Alan Green described star striker Mickey Quinn as overweight.

The furore was faithfully reported by the Coventry *Evening Telegraph*, which devoted its back page to the fans' anti-Beeb criticisms. Strangely, the paper forgot to mention that the Coventry *Evening Telegraph* is a major shareholder in Coventry City. Coincidentally, the *Telegraph*'s proprietor, Robert Iliffe, is also a major shareholder in Mercia Sound, the local BBC radio station's chief competitor.



"It makes you wonder what kind of people watch this rubbish!"

HAS BBC film critic Barry Normal finally reached the age when he should be pensioned off?

Writing in the *Radio Times* in January about the film *We're no Angels*, starring Robert De Niro and Sean Penn, he gave the film four stars and described it as "a delightful comedy drama... played with great zest by the on-form stars... shamefully underrated on release."

Yet the slim and pisspoor *Good Night In Guide*, compiled by Normal and his daughter Emma, takes a rather different line, dismissing *We're no Angels* thus: "Robert De Niro and Sean Penn look uncomfortable as escaped convicts passing as priests in feeble comic remake."

I-BSkyB

TOTTENHAM produced a record goal burst yesterday as Sky's TV battle exploded into action.

Sun

An occasional column for which readers are invited to submit Sky-plugs masquerading as news items in Murdoch papers. The usual £10 will be paid.

THE CROOK, THE *SPECTATOR*, THE JOURNALIST AND HER HUSBAND

LAST YEAR the *Spectator* published an attack on envy journalism by someone called "Veronica Lodge". By way of example, "Veronica" cited the press's treatment of Darius Guppy, Earl Spencer's best man and now a convicted fraudster as well.

It comes as no surprise to learn, in a second *Spectator* article on the press reaction to the verdict against Guppy, that "Veronica" knows and likes Guppy. Indeed, Lodge has been revealed as Ann Applebaum, whose husband Radek Sikorski is an old Oxford chum of Guppy's.

When she wrote the first article, Applebaum (now the *Spectator*'s foreign editor) was working at *The Economist* and was told she could only contribute to the *Spectator* under a pseudonym. This hardly excuses her failure to declare an interest; but in her second article Applebaum, evidently a naive American with a snobbish penchant for aristocratic crooks, has made an even bigger fool of herself.

First she suggested that "as fraud trials go, it was a small one" and would not have got such attention if Guppy had not been best man at the Spencer wedding. It may be news to Applebaum, but in Britain a £1.8 million insurance fraud is hardly small.

Applebaum next complained that the trial judge "waived a defence request for a press ban, on the grounds that the trial was 'in the public interest'." Again it may be news to her, but it is rare in this country for the press to be banned from reporting a criminal trial (as opposed to part of it), because it is reckoned to be in the public interest that justice should be seen to be done.

The thrust of Applebaum's argument is that there is something peculiarly British and peculiarly modern in wanting to read "about golden youth gone astray". Yet surely as an American foreign editor she must be familiar with the American fascination with crimes committed by rich and privileged youth: the Billionaire Boys Club frauds and murder, for example, and the Central Park yuppy murder.

Finally Applebaum takes the London *Evening Standard* to task for a piece on Guppy's new life in prison: "...'his airs and graces won't last long in there,' " the paper gloated. 'There's no wine and wafers with the meals, just bread and water.' " In fact the *Standard* did not write these words itself, it merely quoted one of Guppy's fellow inmates.

O·B·N

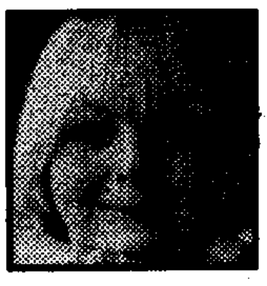
I like David Montgomery, probably because he shares many of my assumptions and much of my background. His position now is delicately poised. But there is steel in that make-up. And if anyone is going to resuscitate the fortunes of the Mirror Group and change it, in ways that will surprise, he, I believe, like a pint of stout — if he will forgive the comparison — is "yer only man".

ROY BRADFORD
Ulster News Letter

Submitted by Eamon Deeny.

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

HACKWATCH No 40: Lynda Lee-Potter



TIME WAS when no tabloid newspaper was complete without its Glenda Slagg, filling a page a week with such *apercus* as "Princess Di — aren'tcha just sick of her?"

With the passing of Jean Rook, however, the true Glenda has become an endangered species. Her space is now more likely to be occupied by a post-punk nihilist (Julie Burchill) or a television critic of the Bitch-on-the-Box type (Nina Myskow, Jaci Stephen).

Still, there is one survivor from the era of the *grandes dames*, when Glenda wore fur coats and expensive scent, and awestruck commissionaires would bow as she strode into her office. She can be found every Wednesday in the *Daily Mail*, opposite the leader page. Her name is Lynda Lee-Potter. As a small tribute to a dying breed, *Private Eye* is proud to publish this digest of recent highlights from her column.

18 November: Christmas is coming, and Lee-Potter — "the over-burdened lady of the house", as she describes herself — is already grumbling in anticipation. She hopes her family will all clear off after Boxing Day "so that their shattered hostess can then settle down in blessed silence with a glass of wine".

25 November: More grumbling. "Britain today is a tough place for most of us," writes Lee-Potter, whose salary is probably not unadjacent to £75,000. "Few families have been untouched by the recession. Most of us are fearful for our jobs..." She adds that she has "worked extremely hard to afford a London flat" — without mentioning that this is merely a second residence, in addition to her large house in Dorset.

2 December: Back to the ever-fertile subject of Yuletide. "The thing most children want for Christmas is evidently a traditional family gathering... They want to play daft family games and pull Christmas crackers." Elsewhere in the column, she describes pet-owners as "spendthrift, daft and indulgent". Daftness looms large in Lynda Lee-Potter's world.

9 December: So, it seems, does alcohol. Today's column is dominated by a bizarre rant against the type of husband who "keeps the wine cupboard locked and remains convinced that pouring the wine is a man's job. If his wife has the temerity to stretch out a hand towards the bottle because her glass is empty he grips her wrist like a vice, saying 'I'll do that.' If he comes home unexpectedly mid-morning to find her having a glass of sherry he asks her if she's got a drink problem."

16 December: Was Lee-Potter irresponsible and stupid to invite a strange man to get into her car and give her directions when she was lost one night? She concedes that her conduct may have been "daft".

23 December: In her Christmas message to the nation, Lee-Potter rails at those who think that "middle age should mean never doing anything showy, exhibitionist or daft". Meanwhile, she is gladdened by Bill Wyman's revelation that, during his marriage to Mandy Smith, he spent the entire Christmas arguing with his wife and mother-in-law. "Any of us dreading Christmas *en famille* can be cheered by the thought that it's unlikely to be worse than that."

6 January: The new year begins in traditional style. "Personally, I'd rather have... a sandwich and a glass of wine rather than a hot dinner and a cup of tea. I think I've got my priorities right. But I can see that somebody with a more practical nature would think I'm profligate and daft." Elsewhere in the column, another recurring theme appears — other women's physical shortcomings. GMTV presenter Fiona Armstrong, she notes disparagingly, has "stocky, hockey player's legs".

13 January: How to cope with erring husbands? "The worst thing a wife can do is to imply she's bereft, lonely and crying herself to sleep like Mrs Graham Gooch, who is being so holy and humble I want to kick her." Much better not to make a fuss, like Josceline Dimbleby: if David Dimbleby doesn't return to her, Lee-Potter thinks, he must be "daft".

14 January: Our heroine makes a special appearance to comment on the newly-published Camillagate tape. Her verdict? Prince Charles's intimate conversation with Camilla Parker-Bowles is "daft".

20 January: "This evening the glossy presidential inaugural ball will be held in Washington and Hillary Clinton will be encased in a new creation of bejewelled velvet. 'I have never been so comfortable in a dress in my entire life,' she says. Scarcely surprising, since the skirt sweeps down to the floor and hides her legs." For anyone who has missed the point, Lee-Potter spells it out: Hillary Clinton has "thick, powerful, sumo-wrestler's legs". The columnist then turns to another pet subject. "If you're a mother-in-law, you should not automatically believe your daughter-in-law is a profligate slut if she's always buying frozen dinners... Neither must you imply she's a boozer if she likes a glass of wine while she cooks."

27 January: Another female sumo-wrestler comes under her critical gaze: "When Lindi St Clair's blubbery body is not lashed tightly into bulging leather, she looks about as sexually alluring as a side of uncooked beef." No wonder, Lee-Potter adds, St Clair's mother thinks her daughter is "daft".

3 February: More women are added to the roll-call of shame. Journalists, she notes, "have to be lovely to everybody even when people aren't lovely back. I have, in my time, been lovely to Elaine Paige, Raquel Welch and Pamela Bordes, while thinking inwardly that they were the most self-obsessed, selfish, self-regarding, tedious prima donnas ever to walk God's earth and I'd like to throttle them." Lovely.

10 February: Staff at the Open University have urged their colleagues not to use sexist language in lectures. Lee-Potter's opinion has a slightly familiar ring. "Do you think," she asks, "people like this are born daft or do they learn it?"

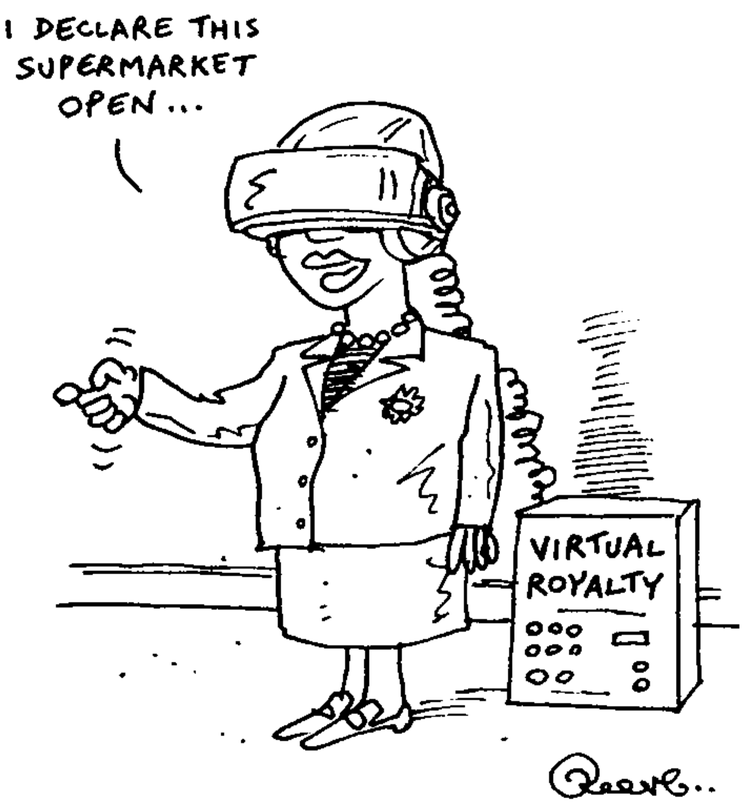
MUSEUM NEWS

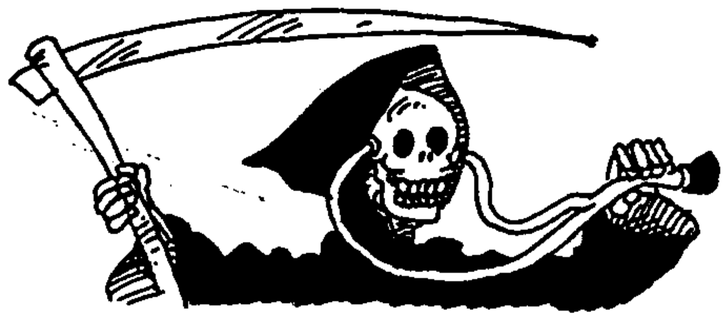
PROGRESSIVES within the art world were shocked by the recent resignation of Simon Roodhouse, appointed to modernise Britain's museums with new training programmes.

Roodhouse seems to have been forced out of his job as director of the Museum Training Institute by an old guard clique resistant to change. Chairman of the institute is none other than "Professor" John Last, who readers will remember as crestfallen ex-chairman of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Society (*Eye* 795). Last was forced out of that position some months ago after an unsuccessful plot to remove the Phil's chief executive, Bob "Creaky" Creech.

Last has his finger in so many art world pies it is amazing he finds time for his day job as head of corporate affairs at Littlewoods. In the early 1980s he was chairman of Merseyside county council arts committee, the Walker Art Gallery, the Philharmonic *and* the Merseyside Arts Association simultaneously. Critics of his "totalitarian" style then remarked that he had more chairs than Habitat.

Unfortunately for Littlewoods, its investment in arts activity may not pay off due to the advent of the national lottery.





DOING THE ROUNDS

SUCH IS the pressure on London's Royal Free hospital to increase productivity that cases are added to the operating lists of singlehanded trainee anaesthetists without their knowledge and after the lists have started.

Such patients are not seen pre-operatively, their fitness for anaesthesia is not ascertained, and often the pre-requisite investigations are not done. The order of the list is also often changed without informing the anaesthetist, making a mockery of pre-medication: one patient was given a pre-med, just five minutes before collection from the ward.

● A PATIENT from **Hayward's Heath** in **West Sussex** recently received a letter from Caroline Duff, contracts manager at **London's Newnham general hospital**, telling her that her regular visits to medical outpatients at NGH had been terminated because her health authority, **Mid Downs**, did not have a contract with NGH and refused to pay for them. The patient is now considering paying the admin fee herself so she can continue attending at the NHS clinic.

● THE "critical response time" of the **London Ambulance Service (LAS)** does not include the time spent listening to the answerphone before getting through.

A **Chiswick** GP called LAS for an elderly emergency and was kept on hold for 26 minutes before paying £65 for a private ambulance.

LAS itself has complained to **Forest Healthcare Trust** after congestion at **Leytonstone's Whipps Cross hospital** prevented ambulances reaching casualty. The hospital, which faces a £2.2 million deficit, closed six wards in December and consequently had trouble dealing with emergencies. Patients were forced to share casualty cubicles and 10 admissions who couldn't be "placed" were given trolleys in the corridor.

● WARD closures at the cash-strapped **Mid Essex Hospitals NHS Trust** are also causing problems. No beds were available for medical emergencies in **Chelmsford, Braintree** and **Maldon Hospitals** in mid January, and no other **Essex** hospital was able to take them. Patients waited for hours in the casualty department of **Broomfield hospital** and some were lodged in TV rooms overnight.

Money was found, however, to buy expensive leather briefcases for managers and a further £28,000-a-year plus car will soon be spent on a publicity manager, whose job it will be to explain why routine orthopaedic appointments have been postponed until October.

● **OXFORD'S John Radcliffe** hospital continues to serve its community well: three-quarters of the patients admitted to the cardiac ward every Wednesday are from fund-holding GPs in Devon and Yorkshire.

If bed shortages occur after check-in, local patients are sent home because it is too far for the others to go. Oxford GPs have also reported problems getting emergencies admitted to the JR.

● IN **Croydon**, too, GPs have problems getting psychiatric, surgical and paediatric emergencies into the **Lifecare Trust**, while the **Wellhouse Trust** in **Edgeware** has put a freeze on ENT and orthopaedic appointments. In **Kent**, a patient will have to wait at least nine months for cardiac catheterization at **London's St Thomas's hospital** because **Medway HA** has no money to pay for it. St Thomas' currently has 100 such patients awaiting appointments and 60 needing heart surgery.

● **SOUTH Warwickshire health authority** is hoping to save £162,000 a year by closing a minor accident department in **Stratford-upon-Avon** in May. The busy department provides facilities for X-rays, plastering and treating eye injuries, and many of its patients are drawn from the two million tourists who visit the town each year. As SWHA chief executive Duncan Allsop put it: "We envisage the patients will go to their own GP..."

● **NORTH Western regional health authority** has yet to explain how £260,000 that was meant to reimburse **Manchester's** GPs for staff, premises and computers was instead used to employ "facilitators", who were assigned to GPs by **Manchester FHSA** without their knowledge or consent, and in some cases didn't even exist. The exposure of this oddity was followed by the resignations of FHSA chairman Professor Peter Turnbull and general manager Regina Shakespeare. Ms Shakespeare has since taken up a post with the **NHS Women's Unit** with the aid of £55,000 from **NWRHA**.

● BRITAIN'S poor record in treating multiply-injured patients (50 percent currently die) will not be helped by **East Kent regional health authority's** refusal to establish a post-graduate orthopaedic training scheme in the region. *Eye* readers should avoid accidents on the M2.

● **NORTH Herts NHS Trust** will soon be responsible for the first ever privatisation of an NHS clinical service by selling **Lister hospital's** diagnostic laboratory service to a Swiss firm, UNI Clinical Laboratories. UNICL will also be in charge of staff employment, though its commitment to training NHS clinical scientists is unclear.

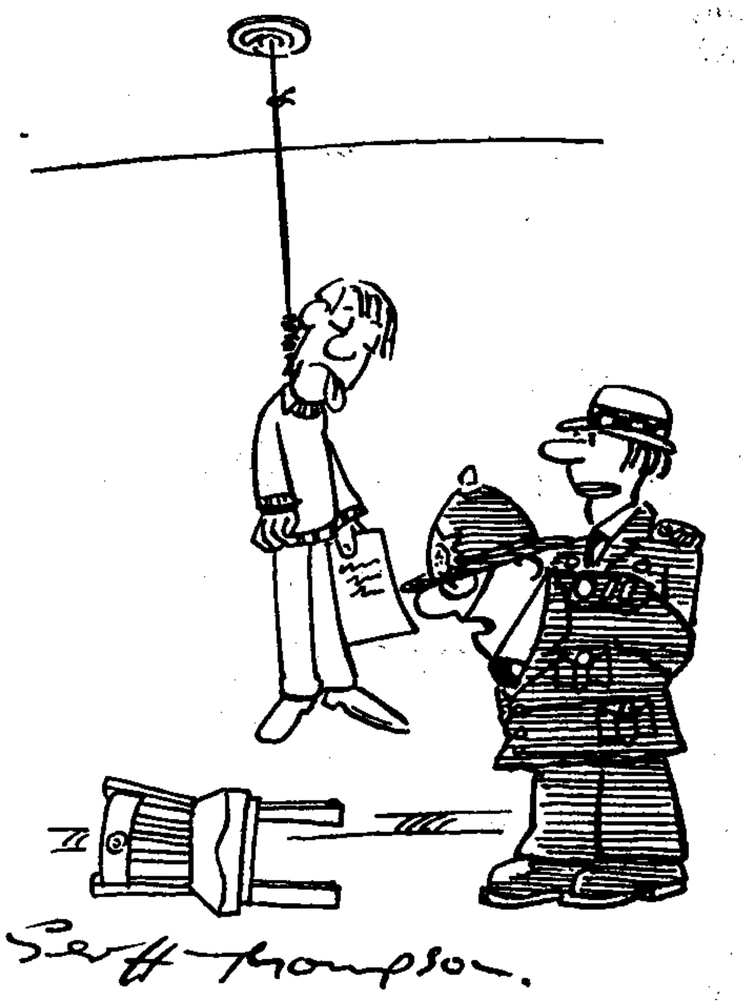
● THE abandonment of NHS psychiatry beds has done wonders for the private psychiatry. A quarter of the beds at **Northampton's** private **St Andrew's hospital** are occupied by NHS patients, including some from **Bloomsbury health authority**, which pays £5,500 a week for each of their 60 "out-liers".

● IN **South Glamorgan**, at least 1,000 jobs are at risk from the proposed closure of eight hospitals deemed to be too expensive to run. Gordon Harrhy, chief executive of **South Glamorgan regional health authority**, claims to have "95 percent support" for the plans, though it remains unclear who from. SGRHA's public credibility is at an all time low following the exposure of several politically motivated senior appointments (*Eyes* 809, 812).

● **PETERBOROUGH District Hospital** has extended its pay-and-display policy to all public car parks with charges starting at 80p. Non-compliers can be released from their clamps for a modest £30. Presumably the hospital's motto — "The Effect is Caring" — only applies to pedestrians.

● DR ALAN Crossley, a GP in the Welsh border village of **Powys** has a third of his patients in England and two thirds in Wales. The English patients face long delays for routine operations because **Hereford and District DHA** has run out of money. No such hardship afflicts his Welsh patients, whose DHA still has money and often sends them across the border to the **Hereford County and General Hospitals** for treatment. Dr Crossley has problems explaining the concept of equal access to healthcare for all.

● SIR JAMES ACKERS may finally have resigned from chairing **West Midlands regional health authority**, but he is still costing the NHS money. Health secretary Virginia Bottomley has decided to pay him a £30,000 golden handshake — despite the millions of pounds that have gone missing or been wasted during his appalling reign.



"According to this, he was tired of London"

The handout is part of a general payola that benefited almost every one of the bungling executives who were running the authority. The former supplies boss, Chris Watney, whose deals with computer companies and bizarre US management consultants sparked Ackers' downfall, has flown back from the Pacific where he was spending the £80,000 *he* got as a pay off.

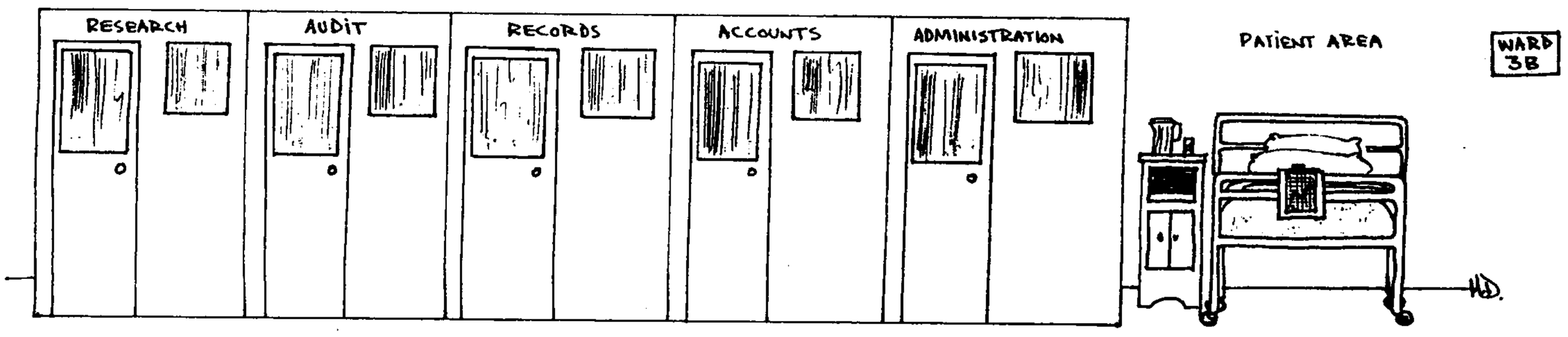
Meanwhile in **South Birmingham district health authority** — the biggest of about 20 controlled by the RHA — cash shortages are hitting hard. South Birmingham is supposed to lead the way in the West Midlands as a regional centre for dozens of specialities. Instead a pathetic memo sent out by finance chiefs recently said: "We have run out of cash", instructing staff to pay no bills until the writs arrive.

● THE news that sacked whistleblower and nurse Graham Pink has been elected to the **UK Central Council for Nursing** has encouraged dissident Dr Chris Chapman to throw his hat into the ring.

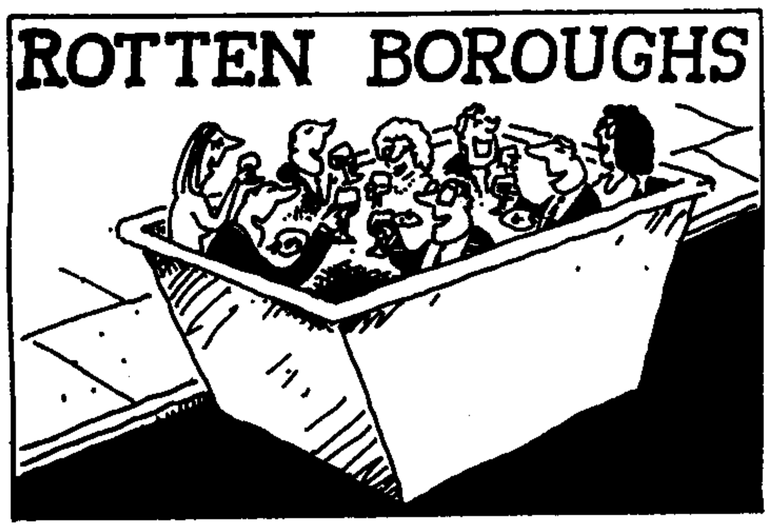
Pink was sacked from **Stockport's Stepping Hill Hospital** after writing to the press about staff shortages (his case goes before an industrial tribunal next month), but in January he won election to the central council, which has the power to strike off the register anyone it finds guilty of misconduct.

Now Dr Chapman — sacked from **Leeds General Infirmary** after blowing the whistle on fraud — is standing for election to the post of secretary of the 1,600-member Association of Clinical Biochemists. Election will be by postal ballot before the association's annual meeting in April. The contest is eagerly awaited because the sitting secretary, and only other candidate, is Dr Ian Barnes — one of the people Dr Chapman made allegations about and who sat on the panel which decided to make the whistleblowing doctor redundant.

M.D.



ROTTEN BOROUGHS



BIRMINGHAM

MASSIVE losses at Britain's biggest white elephant — Birmingham's International Convention Centre — have prompted the city to scale new heights of creative accountancy.

The ICC recently published annual figures showing it cost £8 million to run in 1992/93, compared with income of £2 million. Both figures were dwarfed by its £20 million debt charges.

With £6 million lost by the adjacent National Indoor Arena added on, every poll taxpayer in Birmingham has forked out £46 for the venues this year.

But Labour bosses have had what is known in the city as a good rogering: chief executive Roger Taylor and city treasurer Roger Burton have given them with a face-saving formula that proves that whatever the losses the city still profits.

They say research shows that every visitor to Birmingham spends about £250 a day in hotel and other bills. They multiply that by an estimate of the number of visitors and — hey presto — the resulting massive figure is described as "Birmingham's profit", proving that the ICC is a huge success.

How they decided that visitors spend such an improbably high amount is not explained; nor is the estimate of the number of visitors. The figures forget that many businessmen stay in London and visit Birmingham for as little time as possible — and that hotels who receive most of the gain, take their profit out of the city for their shareholders.

But never mind. The formula has satisfied Labour leader Sir "Dick" Knowles and his chums. They have just voted to pour another £33 million of other people's money into the venues...

MURKEYSIDE

YET ANOTHER senior Liverpool council officer has taken early retirement, leaving the city with over a million pounds worth of overspend.

This time it's Allan Jones, the former head of information technology whose six-year stint in the job has now ended.

Those Scouse residents who actually pay poll tax are vexed to learn that more than £1.8 million in council money has been dished to outside computer consultants — most of it without approval from councillors. Competitive tenders were not invited for consultancy work, and on numerous occasions the official order for work done was placed *after* it had been carried out and the invoices received. A number of the directors of the six companies used by Liverpool had previously been directors of other firms taken on by the authority.

That there exists no council record of *any* report spelling out to councillors the full cost of bringing in computer consultants is also worrying. But Allan Jones has a novel defence. "The breaking of financial rules and regulations is common practice. In Liverpool, and, indeed, at any other local authority they are contravened every day by every department."

Jones came to Liverpool council in 1986, when it was still Militant-dominated. Shortly after his appointment he was tangled up in the controversy over the purchase of a computer system by Merseyside fire brigade (see *Eyes passim*). Derek Hatton was chairman of the fire authority at the time. The system bought was found to be lacking and has subsequently been junked. The district-auditor said the whole deal was badly managed, although he couldn't put it down to wilful misconduct or discover any evidence of personal advantage involved.

But now an investigation is under way into this latest debacle... what will he make of it this time?

LAMBETH

WITH millions of pounds of public money missing from Lambeth town hall, it is good to know officers are getting to grips with the really serious ishoos facing the loony council.

A memo from "Young People's Services Librarian" Steph Smith to senior officers has uncovered the true source of moral corruption in the borough: Roald Dahl's book *The Witches*.

While council officers attempt to find out why £10 million has gone missing, Lambeth chargepayers, whose poll tax is the highest in the country, will be glad to know that Dahl's incorrigible book is "unsuitable for stock" and is to be removed from Lambeth's libraries.

According to Steph Spart "the thought that witches are ordinary looking nice women who hate, steal and kill children is totally (surely) unacceptable... these days when children have to be careful of strangers in a very real sense and we all know the real danger is mainly from men, this book is subversive to say the least."

Spart, whose letter is full of grammatical mistakes and incomprehensible English, refers to "Roahl" Dahl and has "no doubt" about removing *The Witches* from stock, despite "many requests each year for this book".

The memo concludes: "Please withdraw all copies and send requests to me" — presumably so that politically incorrect readers who mistakenly wish to read the book can be snatched from their beds by Lambeth's thought police and sent to special reeducation camps.

No doubt Lambeth will next turn the spotlight on Emlyn Williams's *Beyond Belief*, the story of Moors murderer Myra Hindley, who (being a woman) has never posed any threat to children.

STOCKPORT

LEADERLESS Stockport council has come unstuck in its careless handling of the infamous Veronica Bland passive smoking case.

Ms Bland, a council worker, recently picked up £15,000 from the cuts-wielding council in an out-of-court settlement after claiming that the fumes of colleagues' cigarettes had ruined her singing voice.

With Stockport's three main political parties locked in negotiations to find a new ruling coalition following the demise of a Lib-Lab pact, town hall officers watched Ms Bland pick up the money and then confidently explained that even though the council's insurers had decided the whole thing without consulting the town hall, the insurers would be paying at no cost to chargepayers.

Stockport's officers should have read the small print more carefully. It now turns out that the council is obliged to pay the first £25,000 of any claim which, in this case, means the whole lot.

Chief executive Arthur Wilson now admits: "With hindsight I am sure the council would have defended the case." This is not the first time Stockport has been hoodwinked out of a few bob. It underwrote the disgraced Bank of Credit and Commerce International's drug-running to the tune of £1.1 million, and paid £10 million for a non-Olympic sized swimming pool just six miles away from the site of Manchester's proposed Olympic stadium.

ROCHDALE

CONTROVERSIAL Labour councillor Peter Thomson is in trouble again. This time he is being taken to the ombudsman by a Rochdale woman who claims he pestered her, regularly called round late at night uninvited and posed as a social worker to hoodwink her into believing her son was on the social services "at risk" register.

Thomson denies the allegations, but Rochdale's chief executive John Pierce has advised the woman's solicitor, Manchester lawyer Milton Firman of Burton Copland, to go to the ombudsman. In a letter to Firman, Pierce says there is a "huge discrepancy between the story which he [Thomson] has to tell and that which [the woman] has set out. Clearly one of the parties involved is lying."

Thomson is no stranger to trouble. Already in 1993 he has been taken to court by the council he sits on for non-payment of poll tax. At the eleventh hour he coughed up £736.29 arrears — in cash outside the court. A week after settling, the council was chasing him for another £323.81 in unpaid poll tax. Part of Rochdale's trouble in collecting Thomson's bill was that nobody could work out at which of five addresses he was living.

In a previous incarnation as a Liberal politician, Thomson caused much fuss during a by-election in Manchester's notorious Moss Side seat when residents of the local Hulme estate showed how he had used the publicly-run Hulme People's Centre to boost his election campaign. The then GPO was re-routing tenants' housing complaints to the local Liberal party while Thomson was using the centre to recruit new party members — even those living over the border in Salford.

Funnily enough, at the same time Manchester city council was taking Thomson to court... for non-payment of rates and rent, despite his furious denials at pre-election press conferences.

SOMERSET

RECENTLY OBE'd Somerset Tory Angela Yeoman, owner of Foster Yeoman, the largest quarrying company in Britain, is becoming increasingly adept at handling difficult council officials.

Eye readers will recall how in the new year's honours list she was gonged for "services to the environment" — that is, digging lots of big holes in the Mendip Hills and by the bonny banks of Loch Linnhie, Scotland.

Earlier this year Foster Yeoman successfully applied to Somerset county council to extend a deadline obliging the company to build a road to their latest quarry. Five years ago Somerset's planning committee had recommended approval of Foster Yeoman's application to enlarge its Torr Works quarry subject to the firm's carrying out various highway improvements. The application was passed in April 1990 after Foster Yeoman had agreed to complete the new road by 30 March 1992.

Once the deadline had passed but with no new road, more discussions took place until — surprise, surprise — an "alternative scheme" was found at a cost of £2 million to the council, not Foster Yeoman! No wonder Angela Yeoman is reckoned to be the 134th richest person in the UK.

YOBS

HUSBAND

ULSTER NEWS

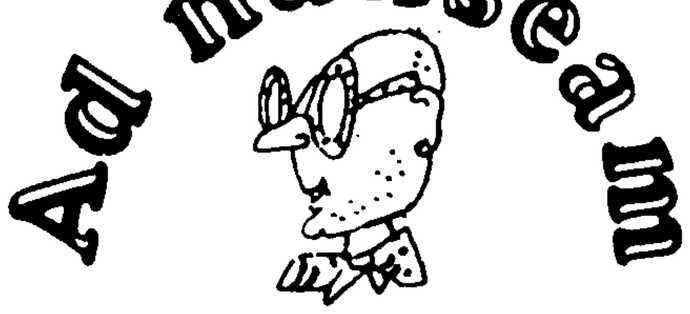
THE decision in 1990, as part of the fair employment legislation, to publish the numbers of police officers "perceived to be Roman Catholic" (ie who went to Catholic schools) has caused the Royal Ulster Constabulary a lot of embarrassment.

Although Catholics make up nearly half the population in Ulster, the figures show that only 8 per cent of the RUC is Catholic. In 1992 there were two assistant chief police officers (down one from the previous year) and only six chief superintendents, (down one from the previous year).

While the RUC boasts that more and more Catholics want to join, that is not borne out by the figures. Applications actually fell in 1992 (from 11.21 per cent of the total to 9.97), and only 39 recruits were taken on.

Restaurant
Le Rawal
SPECIALITES INDIENNES & PAKISTANAISES
FOULLY AIR CONDITIOND HALL • SALLE CLIMATISEES
54, rue Dantzig - 75015 PARIS
RÉSERVATION 45 32 13 67 • 45 31 75 76

Ad nauseam



Sir,

I wonder if anyone has noticed the uncanny resemblance between the British Airways "Gatwick" advert on the telly and a sequence from the film "Fisher King", in which all the people on the concourse at Grand Central Station start dancing. I wonder if perhaps advertisers will ever have an original thought again.

Yours,
LUCA VIGGIANI,

Coulsdon, Surrey.

● ***£10 paid for similar entries.***

DOWN ON THE FARM

with 'New Muckspreader'

JOHN GUMMER'S ministry of agriculture (MAFF) will increase its spending over the next two years by £750 million — a staggering 20 percent. Not bad for the middle of a slump.

No one can say Gummer is not keenly aware of the need to save taxpayer's money, however.

For some time, Britain's schoolchildren have benefited from a £10 million-a-year EC deal to subsidise cheese and buttermilk used in school meals — on the condition that the ministry chips in with an additional £2 million. Now, in its zeal "to contain public expenditure within spending targets", MAFF has decided it cannot afford this sum. We shall therefore no longer get the cash from Brussels... and £12 million a year must be found by the department of education.

This may save MAFF .002 percent of its own planned spending increase; but how it helps "contain total public expenditure" is a mystery even the ingenious Gummer might find hard to explain.

ONE reason for Gummer's parsimony is that he may soon need the money elsewhere.

Slaughterhouse owners, appalled by the disaster which has recently hit their industry as Gummer's MAFF commissars supposedly implement EC meat hygiene rules, have been taking a close look at the fresh meat directive. They are shocked to find that many of the new regulations — which have closed more than a hundred slaughterhouses and threaten hundreds more — are not in the directive at all.

Furthermore, although Gummer has been hailing all this is as necessary to promote "the single market", lawyers have discovered that the directive has nothing to do with the single market at all. It has in fact been made under the common agricultural policy (CAP).

The CAP specifically requires that account should be taken of "structural disparities" between countries, which raises an important legal question. Why is Gummer going to such great lengths to destroy Britain's perfectly sound meat inspection system in order to put his bully-boy vets in post, at £65 an hour?

Plans are now afoot to ask the European court why British slaughterhouses must pay £50 million or more for an absurd system of veterinary inspection to bring us into line with the single market, when the British structure can be accommodated under the CAP. Thus, the schoolchildren's £2 million, and many millions more, may be needed to compensate slaughterhouse owners and livestock products for what looks increasingly like yet another gigantic blunder.

TALKING of gigantic blunders, few can compete with Gummer's slaughter of three million hens — and wasting of £5 million in taxpayers' money — to combat Britain's soaring salmonella epidemic.

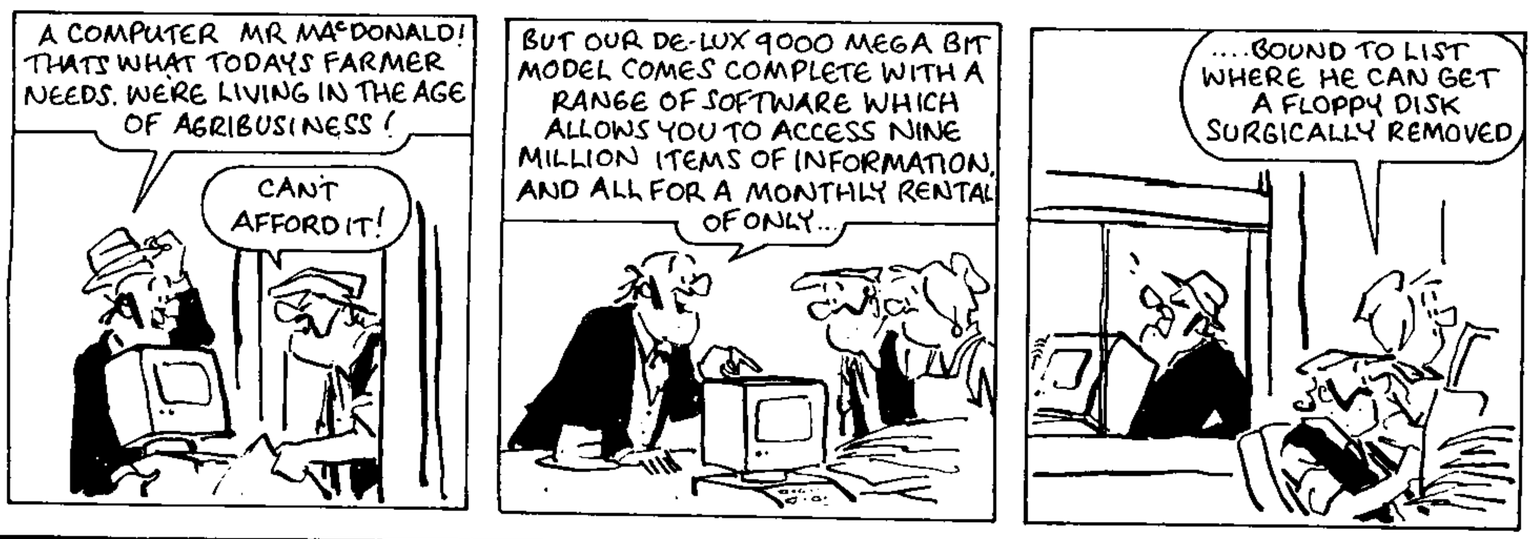
That he has now stopped killing chickens was forced on him by the Dick committee's pointing out, ever so politely, that MAFF seemed to be looking in the wrong direction for the cause of salmonella infection.

Despite this, the committee gave some support to the public health laboratory service (PHLS) and its crackpot obsession that eggs are the major cause of salmonella poisoning, despite the main studies used by the Dick committee showing that in only 38 of 392 outbreaks were egg-based foods reliably associated with the illness — less than 10 percent.

Could this have been because two of the "independent" committee's five members were from PHLS, while a third was a PHLS clone from the Campden Food and Drink Association? Or was it because the main "evidence" used to support the PHLS came from a Dr Steve Palmer?

While hundreds of pages of evidence from other experts were ignored, Palmer did have two great advantages in ensuring his evidence was preferred. Not only was he a member of the PHLS, he was himself a member of the committee.

Old Macdonald


ALBERT
A COMPUTER MR MACDONALD! THAT'S WHAT TODAYS FARMER NEEDS. WE'RE LIVING IN THE AGE OF AGRIBUSINESS!
CAN'T AFFORD IT!
BUT OUR DE-LUX 9000 MEGA BIT MODEL COMES COMPLETE WITH A RANGE OF SOFTWARE WHICH ALLOWS YOU TO ACCESS NINE MILLION ITEMS OF INFORMATION, AND ALL FOR A MONTHLY RENTAL OF ONLY...
....BOUND TO LIST WHERE HE CAN GET A FLOPPY DISK SURGICALLY REMOVED

Letters

Private Eye

Drop the pilot

Sir,

British Airways' "rescue" of Dan Air resulted in three quarters of that company's pilots being made redundant. A captain dismissed after 29 years' exemplary service receives £3,500. Meanwhile a BA communications director who "resigns" in the wake of the dirty tricks scandal gets a reported £300,000. Who said life was fair?

Yours,
R. GREEN,

Edinburgh.

Dung-dong

Sir,

That wily Reynard didn't mention that the woman who had a go at the sabs at Calveley had gone to the defence of her aged dad who was taking some stick for remonstrating with said sabs to get off his farm. The sly old fox forgot to say that she was subsequently pulled off her horse into what I believe is called the mire by urban folk (ie the shit).

Yours faithfully,
GEMMA DEWHURST,

Whitchurch, Shropshire.

Ross on why

Sir,

Previously the titbits of gossip and innuendo praising the contribution made by myself and my company to British broadcasting have been so firmly based in whatever fantasy land your contributors inhabit that I've thought it best to ignore them. Imagine my surprise then, to discover that your latest little piece in Media News actually contains an element of truth.

I was indeed given a copy of a tape featuring "two very funny American gossip reporters" by my younger brother Miles back in 1991. (It's the kind of unsolicited but well meant gesture younger brothers make when they see an older sibling working on a show which isn't performing quite as well as it might.)

However, I never got to view the tape. As is quite common practice, I passed it on to a less busy member of the team to view, who in turn returned it to me with a pink Post-It attached bearing the words "Very Poor Indeed".

The characters of Larry Wyze and Bruce Urquhart that feature in ZOO TIME WITH JONATHAN ROSS *are the creation of Simon Day and John Thompson, and I believe are a parody of* THE HOLLYWOOD KIDS, *a couple of sad but genuine showbiz reporters to be found in syndication on American television. They were seen by Simon and John while on holiday last year. The chance of them having seen anything on BSB is of course so remote as to be almost impossible.*

As always, thanks for caring,

JONATHAN ROSS,

Channel X, London W1.

A Doctor writes

Sir,

I have always wanted to be in PRIVATE EYE — *nearly as good as being on* DESERT ISLAND DISCS. *I certainly did not tell Neil Thomas to "shut up" (see last* EYE*) — we were at medical school together. What has happened to your faith in the medical mafia?*

Yours sincerely,
DR GRAHAM WINYARD,

Director of Public Health/Regional Medical Director, Wessex Regional Health Authority, Winchester.

Doing the Lambeth audit

Sir,

Your snippet of 12 February was grossly inaccurate.

The report I put into the public domain on 11 January concerning malpractices and irregularities in parts of Lambeth council's operations first appeared in 1992.

When in November 1991 the first sign of problems emerged I sent a copy of a report considered by Lambeth council to the secretary of state for the environment, Mr M. Heseltine, and a further interim report to Mr M. Howard in October 1992. Since 1991 the district auditor has been investigating these matters and his report is awaited. Similarly, the outcome of internal audit investigations are awaited.

You either knew these facts and chose to ignore them, or are sadly and badly misinformed.

Yours faithfully,
HERMAN OUSELEY,

Chief Executive, London Borough of Lambeth.

Lookalike

Lawson

Bean

Sir,

I wonder if you've noticed the striking similarity between Dominic Lawson (son of Nige) and handsome comic Mr Bean? Perhaps they are related. I think we should be told.

Sincerely,
FREDERICK KELLEHER.

Polly gone

Sir,

I have been amazed at the response of a FINANCIAL TIMES *correspondent David Barchard (see "Angry Barchard" in issue 810) to the review of his book* ASIL NADIR AND THE RISE AND FALL OF POLLY PECK *by City Slicker (issue 808). The review appears to be a fair assessment of the book, even though in contrast, the* FINANCIAL TIMES *reviewer considered the book "objective".*

Mr Barchard's response is even more puzzling since he himself is a book reviewer, and as he discloses, wrote reviews for Nadir's TURQUOISE *magazine. What Mr Barchard fails to disclose, however, is how he missed the scoop of the year in 1990. When everyone in Fleet Street was trying to trace the connection between Jason Davies, South Audley Management Ltd and Asil Nadir, Mr Barchard failed to observe that Davies was listed as the London advertising manager of the magazine, on the same telephone line with which he communicated to Elizabeth Forsyth and Metin Munir at SAM's 24 Berkeley Square address. This was in fact Barchard's very first issue as a book reviewer, in which he evaluated the books* SULTANS IN SPLENDOUR, TURKEY: A TIMELESS BRIDGE *and* EMBASSY TO CONSTANTINOPLE.

One wonders whether this failure to solve the Jason Davies mystery arises from a lack of investigative zeal or some other consideration?

Yours sincerely,
ILLEGIBLE.

LUVVIES

Terence Stamp can remember when he first realised he was beautiful. "It happened at Elstree, when I saw a scene from my first film, *Billy Budd*," he says. "They hadn't wanted me to see the rushes, so I had no idea of how I was going to look. Until then I had never considered myself as much to write home about physically. What I saw that day really took me aback.

"What I was *witnessing*" — the actor's choice of verb and reverential tone make him sound like a bystander recalling one of the more noteworthy New Testament miracles — "was a very advanced state of being photogenic."

TERENCE STAMP
Observer

Submitted by Ian Macmillan.

An occasional column featuring gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

Cot deaths

Sir,

Your recent coverage of mattresses and cot death (20 Nov 92; 4 Dec 92; 29 Jan 93;) has focused on the claim that toxic gases given off by cot mattresses cause cot death, and the suggestion is made that this claim has been ignored.

Two studies were commissioned in 1990 — one by the Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths and the other by the department of health. Each reported in 1991 and neither was able to find any evidence to substantiate the claim. The foundation is continuing to pursue research questions raised by these studies. However, cot death is unlikely to have a single cause and the foundation continues to fund research to pursue a very wide range of possible causes of sudden deaths in infants.

Yours faithfully,
JOYCE EPSTEIN.

Secretary-General, The Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths, London SW1.

Missing the Beat

Sir,

Come on EYE, *get your facts right. Esther Rantzen was never a contributor to ATV's* ON THE BRADEN BEAT. *Ms Rantzen joined* BRADEN'S WEEK *when BB moved to the Beeb.*

Lord Gnome must remember that the only "discovery" from Braden's ATV show was that truly great sage, poet, philosopher (and prophet of doom) E.L. Wisty, who urged the world to seek PEACE THROUGH NUDISM. *He was the only honest man to enlighten us that the national obsession with the royal family exists simply because it's "interesting that they're doing something extremely boring". As an accolade, he became proxy godfather to my ginger tom, Spotty Muldoon.*

Had this great visionary and his World Domination League survived, surely he would now be president, unlike Ms Rantzen who still works for the Beeb after 20 odd years.

I am sir, yours etc,
RICHARD H. POUT,

London N8.

Gift of the Gabb

Sir,

I read your correspondent's Letter from Bratislava (Eye 813) with rising disappointment.

Certainly, the Slovaks made a bad choice at the last election. Their government is ruining an already weak economy and offending all the national minorities. My old boss, Jan Carnogursky, did a better job in every respect than the current prime minister.

Instead of developing these points, though, your correspondent keeps to a half dozen tired calumnies that, by diverting attention from its true defects, leave the Slovak government unscathed.

Take, for example, the claim that Dusan Slobodnik, the minister of culture, "trained with the fascist Hlinka guard and the SS". In fact Slobodnik was born on 11 April 1927. On 22 April 1945, he was arrested by the Red Army and deported to the Soviet Union. A schoolboy 11 days past his 18th birthday is unlikely to have been training with two separate elite military units, one of them foreign. Nor if he had been a rabid young Nazi would the Soviets have let him return 10 years later, in good health and an able linguist. This nonsense gets a higher placing than a loose reference to Slobodnik's undeniable and very disturbing attack on the liberals in Trnava university.

Take, again, the claim that "Slovaks were only narrowly prevented (by the Czechs) from putting up a statue to their national hero Tiso [the Slovak Petain] two years ago". This is untrue. A plaque was unveiled in Tiso's home town by a fringe party bitterly hostile to the governing coalition. No Slovak politician of any importance was present. Nor did the federal, let alone the Czech, authorities intervene: quite properly in a free country with a balanced constitution, they had no power to prevent such occasions.

I could go through your correspondent's letter, refuting or correcting almost every one of his assertions. It is enough to say, however, that it completely misrepresents what is happening in Slovakia. If its intention was to help to press the government there into better ways, it entirely fails. Indeed, so far as it inflames Slovak national feelings, it even puts off the day of that government's fall.

Anyone who really wants to know what is happening there should take out a subscription to the English-language PRAGUE POST, *or should — on payment of the appropriate fee — consult me.*

Yours sincerely,
SEAN GABB,
(Economic and Political Adviser to the Slovak prime minister, 1991-92)

London SE6.

Lookalike

McCririck

Dracula

Sir,

I wonder if any of your readers have noticed, as I have, the extraordinary resemblance between TV racing pundit John McCririck and Gary Oldman playing Bram Stoker's Dracula? Is the evil genius whose very name strikes fear into all women's hearts by any chance related to the Transylvanian Prince of Darkness? I think we should be told.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER LEGGETT,

Hertford Heath, Herts.

I-SPY

Co. Galway

Submitted by David Redhill. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Scot freebie

Sir,

I was very interested to read stories published in the last two editions of the EYE *re. the exploits of Jimmy Wray MP who supposedly recently sold me some "unrepresentative products" for the princely sum of £500. A rather peculiar claim considering that the person in question gave the items in question free of charge some months ago.*

Methinks perhaps the magazine has itself been duped by a story more concerned with Scottish party politics than purchase prices.

Yours sincerely,
ALAN MEALE MP,

House of Commons, London SW1.

Sphere of influence

Sir,

Piloti has been spouting complete bollocks about most things architectural and planning related for years now. But why has A.N. Pierce-Jones (Letters, EYE *812) decided to terminate his collection of your organ? Most people enjoy their television for the likes of Messrs Merton and Anderson etc. rather than not pay a licence and stick to radio just because Beadle is carried on the same medium.*

Yours,
T. TARQUIN SCOTT,

Preston, Lancs.

Tubular balls

Sir,

Julie Burchill's use of "orchidaceous" may be pretentious, but it's hardly inexcusable (pace James Petts, EYE *813). The etymology goes like this: "orchidaceous", a fancy adjectival form derived from "Orchidaceae", the 16th-century botanists' name for the orchid plant family. "Orchidaceae" was itself coined on the mistaken assumption that the Late Latin "orchis" (meaning orchid, and related to the interesting Middle Irish word "uirrge", bollock) contained a "d" in inflected forms. The whole story began with the Greeks who noted the fleshy tubers on wild orchid roots (as did later English country-folk who called the plant "ballock grass") and used the term "orkhis" for both male appendage and three-petalled flower. None of this seems to have any connection with the preceding entry in my dictionary: "Orchestras" n.pl. testicles. (British English rhyming slang from "Orchestra Stalls")...*

Yours endlessly,
TONY THORNE,

Teddington, Middx.

Sir,

I can't decide whether the huge type size used by the publishers of Julie Burchill's NO EXIT *is an attempt to puff up a slim word count into something resembling a genuine novel or an act of consideration for the damaged eyesight of her likely readers.*

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES LEE,

Haywards Heath, W. Sussex.

Stir crazy

Sir,

I have to point out Grovel's balls up visa [sic] my good pal Dennis Nilsen.

1st Dennis worked at Denmark St job centre (not very north is it).

2nd The "little pot boiler" incident was covered in KILLING FOR COMPANY *and other books over five years ago!*

3rd Dennis did not start boiling until his move from 23 Cranley Gardens after the said chili con carne.

Pip Bloody Pip,
R. MARKLEW,

London W7.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"Both players must stand behind each other..."
RAY FRENCH, BBC1
(Doug Marsden)

"I shall fight every tooth and nail I find."
LEYLAND-DAF SHOP STEWARD, R3
(Sheelagh Mills)

"He came on a free transfer and has been giving good value for money."
CLIVE ALLEN, LBC
(George Cibbard)

"Des Walker knows that Signori has all the tricks up his book."
RAY WILKINS, Channel 4
(P. Spindloe)

Caller: *I would like to send birthday greetings to my wife, Dilys Williams.*
Keith Owen: *What's her name?*
Caller: *Dilys Williams.*
BBC Wales
(Grenville Barrett)

Letter from **São Paolo**

from Our Own Correspondent

ONE OF THE most unpleasant social occasions of recent weeks in our industrial capital was the fundraising buffet dinner in a hall at the local racetrack organised by the loopy lawyer Bertrand de Orleans e Braganca, pretender to our non-existent Brazilian imperial throne.

With a few weeks to go till we stage a referendum on whether we want to retain our presidential system, adopt a parliamentary one or go back to the monarchy we so, er, "enjoyed" until 1889, unknown princelings are springing up everywhere to stake their claim to be our next monarch — if the vote goes the right way for them, which it won't.

Every last kook seems to be claiming the title of our once and future prince, doubtless in order to seize the free TV advertising time that the government is decreeing.

The most presentable is the octogenarian Dom Pedro Gastão de Orleans e Braganca, a jolly codger with a moustache who was born "in exile" in France and who lives in a large untidy pile in the old imperial capital of Petrópolis, a sceptre's throw across the square from his ancestor's summer palace. He owns a parrot, rides to the office on a horse, does reasonably well out of the property business in Petrópolis and has a permanent twinkle in his eye which betokens a liking for what you British call "a snorterino or twain".

But I digress. Dom Pedro Gastão's misfortune is to have ghastly jumped-up cousins called Bertrand and Luiz as rivals for the throne. He and his mates are known as the Petrópolis group, the terrible cousins are called the Vassouras group, after the village where they live.

It was the Vassouras group who had the recent party — only Luiz was too poorly to come. Bertrand was left to decorate the draughty hall with plastic flags and invite the local *nouveaux riches* and assorted shysters. The most ghastly johnnies arrived and were seated at tables by Luiz's head waiter, à bespectacled Anglo called Morgan, and his Chinese sidekick.

A number of Chinese businessmen were also there, presumably to suss out the catering contract for the next bunfight. There were also a few blacks at the buffet who, given the monarchy's penchant for slavery, looked much like turkeys preparing to vote for Christmas. If one takes account of the stall selling monarchist gewgaws, the atmosphere was similar to what one would get if a socially awkward right-wing professor was in charge of a dinner dance for Margaret Thatcher at a golf club in Finchley.

Unfortunately, Bertrand's bash was full of headbangers who would regard Thatch as a Trotskyite and protestant heretic to boot. Both brothers are members of Tradition, Family and Property, a fascist organisation which tries to pass itself off as catholic but makes Opus Dei seem progressive. Its views have as much to do with the message of Jesus as did the steel toecap of Heinrich Himmler's right jackboot. Bertrand and Luiz seem happy at TFP's revolting record of support for the military putsch of 1964 and the disgusting tortures inflicted on those men, women and children who were suspected of opposing them here in Sao Paolo and elsewhere.

Luiz and Bertrand are lifelong celibates which doesn't bode well for the future of the imperial house if these monarchists were to win the vote. Say what you like about us Brazilians, but we do like our leaders to have a full set of functioning wedding tackle. For that reason alone, Luiz and Bertrand will never get near the throne.

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN

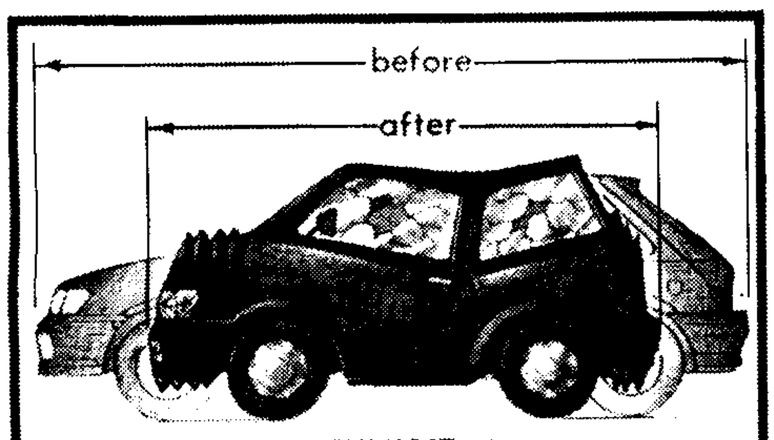
TRUE STORIES

CHRISTOPHER LOGUE

HAVING called the Maintenance Department of Bracknell Forest Borough Council to say that the boiler in her house was leaking, Mrs Katherine Patient was outraged to hear from the leader of the three men sent to repair it that the boiler was unsafe and would have to be shut down over the Christmas and New Year period, "even though that would mean spoiling the holiday for the whole family. At this point," she said, one of them went out to start up their van, so I locked the other two in my sitting room and when they tried to get out I told them through the keyhole that they would be spending the Season with me unless they fixed the boiler at once. Needless to say, they had it done in next to no time." "My thermal engineers were within their rights, as it was a matter of domestic security," said Mr Victor Thomas, the Council's Chief Engineer.

ASKED by the Bulawayo Social Administration why the Ziazappa Purification Plant had employed ten extra hands on the morning of 14 February, Mr Tawanda Chitapi, the plant's under-manager, said: "Mrs Chivamva Rahman, the Plant's senior secretary, flushed the toilet in her office at the same time as she blew her nose and the pressure forced out her glass eye and it fell into the pan and was washed away. As she was going to a party that night, we hired the men to search the outflows for Mrs Rahman's eye, which I am happy to say they found in good time."

SPEAKING on behalf of his client, Mr Charles Stamper, Mr Dennis W. Dohnal, a Virginia lawyer, said: "My client, who is unable to walk, but who has been condemned to the electric chair for the murder of three waiters, is a proud man and has asked for permission to crawl to the chair rather than be wheeled up to it. He feels it is most important that in his last moments he should be allowed to retain his dignity."



Bert Kitchen

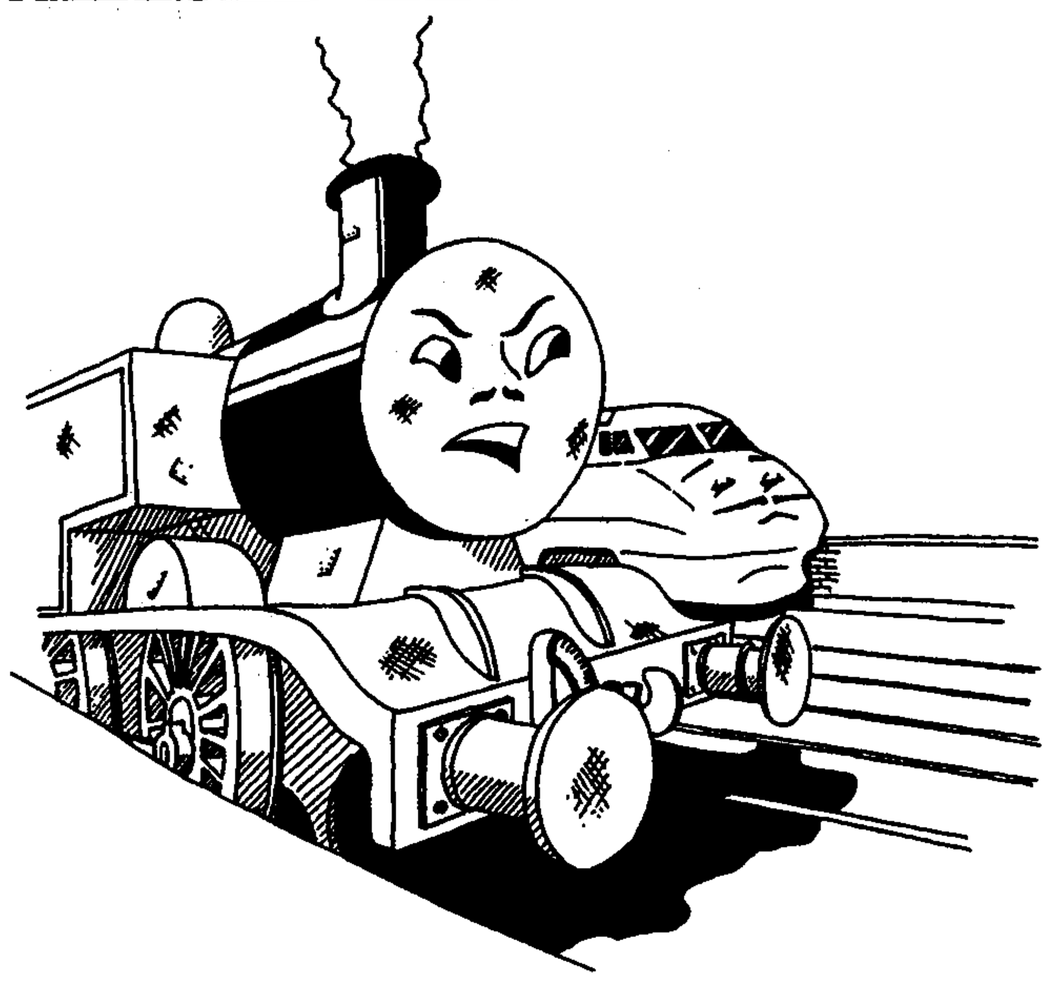
IN HER report of the incident, Mrs L. Butcher said: "My husband had just parked his car when a lady, driving a large BMW, was cheated of the bay next to his by a young man who slipped in nose first while she was still reversing. Getting out of his Fiesta, the young man said: 'That's the way to do it when you can drive!' Whereupon the lady revved up her car and drove it straight into the Fiesta, smashing its back to bits with her own, and driving its front into the wall with the impact. Then she lowered her window, and said: 'That's the way to do it when you are rich.' "

MR ROBERT Tuttle of Newlyn has been fined £50 for insisting that policewoman Susan Whippy serve him a pint of beer after hours because he thought she was a barmaid in fancy dress.

INFORMATION: Heating & Ventilating News 16.1.93; Bulawayo Chronicle 14.1.93; New York Times 19.1.93; Solihull News 15.1.93; The Cornishman 19.11.92. MONITORS:David Peckover, Dale Cartwright, Paul Marsh, R.C. Tudge, John Millett.

THOMAS

THE PRIVATISED TANK ENGINE



Thomas and the French Connection

THERE was a strong smell of garlic as Thomas pulled into the main station one morning. At the opposite platform stood a very odd train.

"What the hell kind of train are you?" asked Thomas.

"I am Jean-Paul the Frog engine. Today I am miserable."

"Why?"

"Because today the Tunnel opened and from now on I will have to visit this backward, under-funded and dogma-driven country of yours every day."

"We're not backward, under-funded and dogma-driven," retorted Thomas. "We're the only country in Europe to have fully-privatised rail services."

"Precisely," said Jean-Paul with a laugh. "You English have a lot to learn. You still believe private capital can build railway lines."

Thomas blushed as he recalled the huge cock-up private-sector funding had made of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. And the Jubilee Line extension. And the scheme to bring modern trams to Bristol...

"You see, *mon ami*, I am designed to travel at 300 kilometers per hour," boasted Jean-Paul.

Thomas didn't know whether to believe him. It sounded very fast, but he had never heard of kilometers before.

"I've even got my own signalling system in my cab," said Jean-Paul.

"Rubbish!" said Thomas. "How could signals possibly fit inside an engine?"

Jean-Paul smiled patronisingly. "In France, the state has built me fast railway lines, straight as an arrow. But here your old railway tracks are *merde*: all the bumps and curves are bad for my suspension."

"Don't you insult my railway!" shouted Thomas. "I'll have you know it was built by George Stephenson himself, in 1834." "Precisely."

"I'll show him, I'll show him," puffed Thomas as he left the station. "He can do what he likes in France, but over here he'll jolly well play by the English rules."

NEXT morning, Thomas smelt Jean-Paul behind him as he pulled into a little country station.

"Toot-toot, I'm an express service," called Jean-Paul.

"Not any more you ain't - this is England," said Thomas, waiting for an old lady to find pennies for her ticket.

"Hurry along, hurry along," urged Annie and Clarabel.

"Plenty of time, plenty of time," yawned Thomas as he rolled from one wayside station to the next.

And sometimes Thomas would pretend to suffer sudden senile dementia - he was 40 after all. That would delay Jean-Paul for hours, because rationalisation meant there were no extra tracks to contend with emergencies.

AND, sure enough, Thomas began to see a lot less of Jean-Paul after a few weeks; Jean-Paul was too slow.

"300 kilometers per hour, my wheel!" chuckled Thomas.

Instead, the passengers chose to go to France by plane or by car.

"Oi! Are you lookin' at my bird?"

POETRY CORNER

Lines On The Closure Of The *City Limits* Magazine

So. Farewell
City Limits,
London's listings
magazine.

"Alternative Rock Agit
Prop Cafe Theatre."

That was
Your catchphrase.

"40s Vegan separatist
Lesbian seeks
Similar (no Scorpios)."

That was
Another.

Keith says he
Read it once
When he was at
Polytechnic.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

Great Bores Of Today.

"... the English just can't do it if this was America we'd have been served in half the time the waiters would have been friendly and attentive you know iced water without asking that sort of thing and you sense that they enjoy what they do it's the same in Europe it's part of the culture do you remember that place in Paris? they couldn't have been more charming and it was only a little restaurant in the back streets they were just pleased to see us it's the same in shops I went into the chemist to get something for a migraine and the girl didn't even look up she couldn't be bothered wherever you go it's the same story surly unhelpful couldn't care less you'd never believe there's a recession on they should be grateful to have a job at all waiter! waiter! oi! waiter!..."

SUMMARY

Maxwell to join Independent

From tomorrow the Independent is proud to welcome one of the country's leading financial experts to its City pages. No one is better qualified to comment on the world of high finance, banking and the stock market than the late Robert Maxwell. Every week Maxwell will be stealing money from our office *(shurely 'offering professional advice to our readers'? Ed).*

Don't miss his first column today on "Pensions: The Way Ahead".

MAJOR OUT TO KILL YELTSIN

AP Moscow

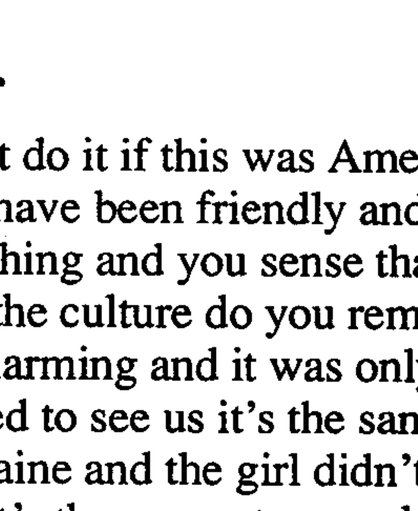
New Zealand Herald

A Taxi Driver writes

Each week a prominent cabbie is invited to discuss an issue of topical importance.

This week: **Damian Shellsuit** (cab no. 0898)

Bloody hopeless these banknotes aren't they? 'specially for foreigners and the elderly with bad eyesight and that — to them one note looks pretty much like another. They can't tell the difference. Straight up! They hand you over a twenty for like Belsize Park to Euston and then you give 'em change for a tenner! And you're laughing, aren't ya?



Cabbie of the Year 1992

Now they're gonna change it. Bloody government! This game's hardly worth it as it is — sorry, guv, was that a fiver? Oh, here's the other one then.

I had that Robin Leigh-Pemberton in the back of the cab once.

NEXT WEEK: Eddie Grunge (no. 78423) on the need for the reintroduction of the death penalty to deal with Dr Kalim Siddiqui on the grounds that it is the only language he understands.

The Secret Diary of John Major aged 47¾

Monday

Today is a very historic day in my judgement. As I told my wife Norman at breakfast, "In years to come schoolchildren will refer to it as 'C-day' — 'C' being for 'Charter', of course."

"I very much doubt they will," she replied in her somewhat acerbic tone, "because they won't be able to spell."

Sometimes I think she should stick to opera, which is what she knows about. But I refuse to let her dampen my spirits. As I was able to announce to the Downing Street Seminar later in the morning: "We have now produced 100 Charters. That is a not inconsiderable record and anyone who says that my government has done nothing, has only to look at the Charters to see how much we have achieved."

Mr Waldegrave and I spoke to the press, sitting at a long table with huge piles of Charters stacked up in between the bottles of spring water. It was altogether a very impressive occasion, as both the journalists agreed at the end of my 3-hour introduction. Mr Waldegrave, with the help of an overhead projector and some coloured pens, explained how our new Charter Helpline will operate. Anyone who is unhappy with any of our Charters will be able to ring up on an 0898 number which will advise him which number to ring for the relevant Charter Ombudsman who will then take details as to where to send the relevant form to fill up in order to make a formal complaint under the relevant provisions of the Charter for Charters. While Mr Waldegrave was in the middle of his very interesting presentation, his bleeper went and he had to take the first call from a lady who wanted to make a complaint about Parcelforce. Unfortunately he had to explain that there was no Charter for Parcelforce because it was about to be privatised so it was nothing to do with the government.

The journalists were clearly very impressed with this example of the Charterline in action. One of them said, "I don't believe it," and the other one suggested that they went off for a drink, presumably to celebrate.

Tuesday

Mr Clinton, who is the new President of the United States, has made a very serious mistake to my way of thinking. After promising not to raise taxes, he has now gone on television to say he is going to put them up after all.

"I would never do that," I told Norma Lamont, when I saw him after breakfast picking up his bottles from the doorstep. "No, but I will next week," he said, rolling his eyes in a funny way.

After he had gone inside, I remembered the article I had read in the Daily Mail saying that I should make Mr Portfolio Chancellor instead. The article said that he was the only minister left in the government who knew what he was talking about. This is odd because he hasn't said anything for six months.

Wednesday

Mrs Bottomley is certainly doing a marvellous job with the hospitals. Her very brave decision to save Bart's has rightly in no small measure been praised by everyone, and now we have got the credit for saving it, she says she can close it down in a few months time when everyone has forgotten about it.

Thursday

My government has achieved another historic record. Today we were able to announce that our output of unemployment has risen to 3 million, which is the same as the number of people who haven't got jobs. As I explained to the Cabinet, these two figures balance each other out almost exactly. Everyone looked at me in amazement, and my friend Mr Clark said: "Prime Minister, with your grasp of figures perhaps you should be Chancellor of the Exchequer."

"Who says I haven't got a grasp of figures?" said Norma Lamont, putting his arms round Mrs Bottomley in a curiously friendly way.

It was left to Mr Hurd to point out that my government would soon surpass the highest unemployment figures achieved by Mrs Thatcher in the great days of the '80s. I was in no small measure gratified to think that once again I had put her achievements in the shade.

Friday

Today I spent the whole morning with our family solicitor, Mr Snooper, of Diddle and Co, discussing my very important libel action about the allegation that I had not had an affair with the cook.

"The other side have offered a full apology, damages and costs," he said, "but in my opinion this is disgraceful and totally inadequate." I was a little puzzled by this, but apparently the law of libel is very complicated, and can only be understood by experts like my friend Jeffrey Archer. When I rang him up to ask his advice, he said: "Take them all the way, John. You'll get bags of publicity and a huge cheque, which you can say you're going to give to charity. But you'll have to have some good looking bird in court to stand by you and give the judge the hots. Why don't you take that dark-haired cook you used to have?" He then rang off, saying he had a new book to write that afternoon.

Saturday

My wife Norman showed me some very nasty murder stories in the papers at breakfast. It quite put me off my Raspberry Pop Tarts. After breakfast, Mr Clarke came in. "Have you seen the papers, John?" he asked. "They are full of appalling things."

"Someone else hasn't libelled me, have they?" I replied, quick as a flash. "And if they have, it's not true."

"Not your cook rubbish!" snapped Mr Clarke with an inappropriate measure of acerbity, in my judgement. "Crime! Crime! The country's falling apart. What are you going to do?"

"That is your job," I told him. "You are the Home Secretary, and Law and Order comes within your remit."

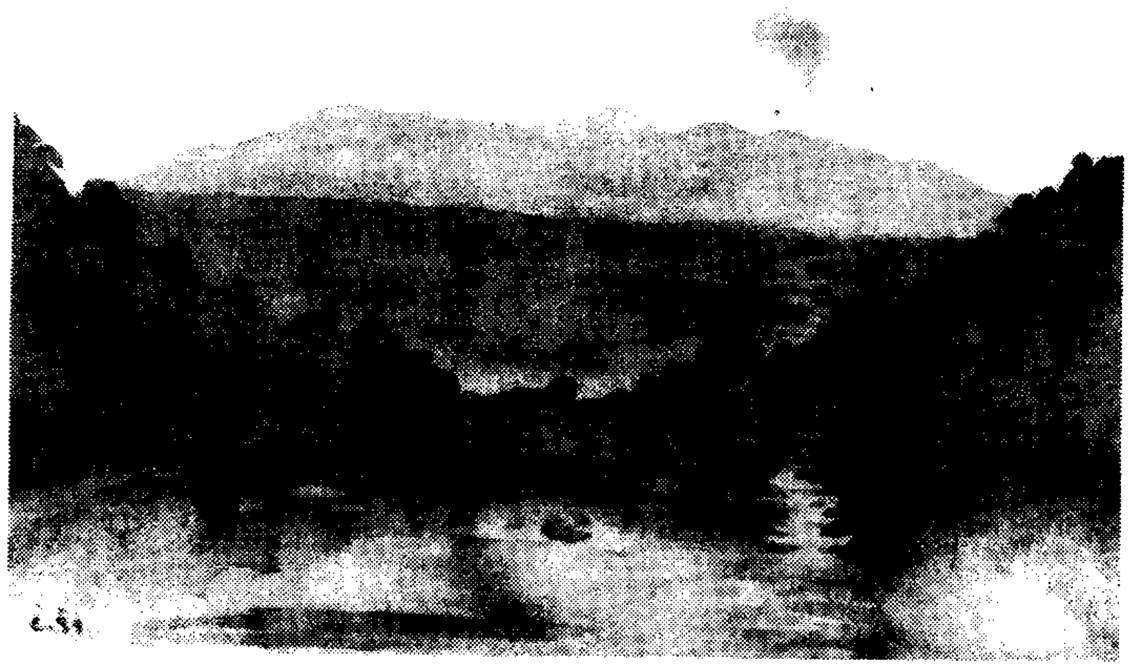
"Very good, Prime Minister," he replied. "Shall we do the usual?"

"Brilliant idea," I said. "We shall announce a crackdown at once."

I told this to Norman at lunch but she did not seem in any degree suitably impressed. "That's the third crackdown this week. I hope you are not cracking up."

I did not enjoy either this remark or the M&S Vegetarian Lentil Lasagna with Sweetcorn from the microwave which we were eating.

THE ROYAL ACADEMY



British Watercolour Exhibition

What To Look Out For

by Brian R. Sewell

John Selwyn Cotman
GUMMER'S POND
Delightful study of pond in the Suffolk garden of a gentleman (believed to be J.S. Gummer Esq). Note the elaborate landscaping carried out at no expense by large firms hoping to benefit from Mr Gummer's political patronage.

John MacGregor
TWYFORD DOWN
Charming study of beautiful Hampshire Downland scene dominated by huge bulldozers.

Jocelyn de Stevens
STONEHENGE
Romantic scene of ancient stones dwarfed by new Heritage Centre and Toilet Complex.

John Birtin
VIEW OF THE OLD FORGAN
Picturesque sketch of the way forward for the BBC in the years preceding the renewal of the Charter.

John Major
PROSPECT OF MAASTRICHT (SEEN FROM WESTMINSTER)
Typical example of his work. Shades of grey, no perspective and weak grasp of detail.
(That's enough watercolours. Ed.)

Major backs Neasden's Olympic bid

by Our Olympics Correspondent
Anna Bollick-Steroid

THE PRIME Minister yesterday gave his full backing to Neasden's multi-pound bid for the 1994 Olympics.

Unveiling the plans for the Neasden Olympiad Centre, Mr Major described them as "highly exciting and original. In my judgement they will prove irresistible to the committee."

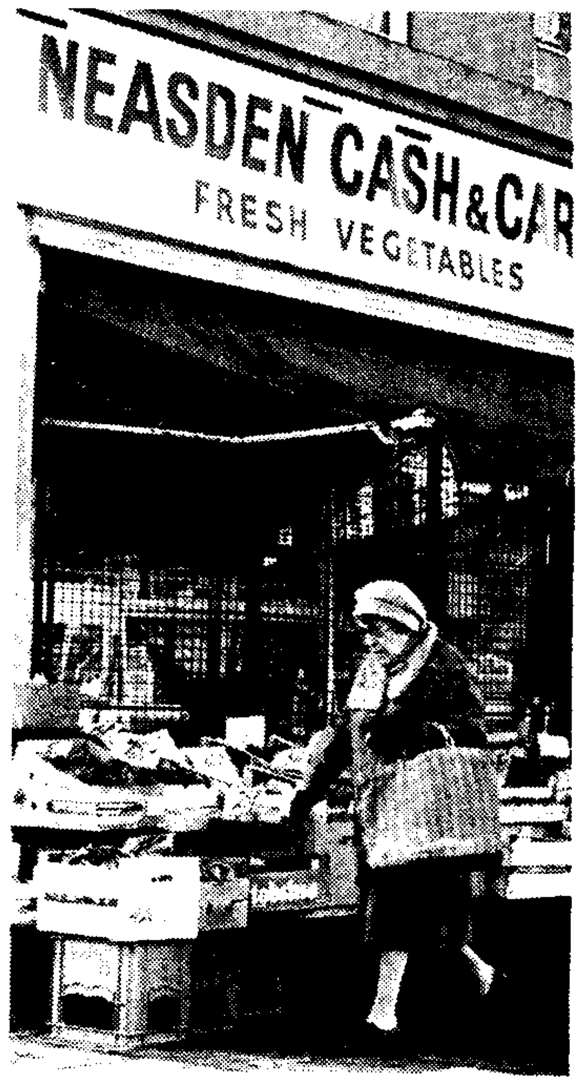
At his side at the ceremony the local Mayor, launderama magnate Brigadier Buffy Cohen, announced the slogan "Let's Make More in '94", which some observers took to be a reference to the profits of his burgeoning launderama-to-adult-video conglomerate.

Both Major and Cohen agreed that, compared to Neasden, Sydney, Peking and San Francisco were "no-hopers" in the race for the most prestigious prize in the international sporting calendar.

How Neasden will look in '94

FOOTBALL STADIUM: will house all major track and field events except synchronised lawnmowing which will be in the Cohen Garden Centre (Pricerite Road. Now open 7 days a week).

MUNICIPAL SWIMMING BATHS: will host all watersports including sailing and underwater wrestling.



GEORGE Vth MEMORIAL HALL: will become the Olympic Village. Any overflow will be accommodation in the upstairs room of Mr Gerhardie's Mags'n'Fags Emporium (Waitrose Road) once he has moved out the boxes of unsold Yorkie bars.

MILLETS: will become the official outfitters for the Games, providing army surplus boots and gloves for the sprinters.

Plans for a lavish opening ceremony are now well advanced, with tableaux designed to show famous Neasden sporting heroes through the ages. The legendary Neasden FC own-goal king Baldy Pevsner has already applied to the Governor of Neasden Scrubs to be allowed out for the ceremony in which he is to fire a flaming arrow at a policeman *(shurely 'the Olympic Bowl'? Ed)*.

Ron Knee OBE is 59.

LATE SCORE

Sydney	158
Neasden	No votes

ROYAL STORY 'PATHETIC' SAY CRITICS

by Our TV Staff
Marcus Lawson and Mark Berksteyn

THE WINDSOR saga was last night dubbed "a dismal failure" by the nation's experts. Adjectives ranged from "laughable" to "ridiculous" to describe the performances in the lengthy soap opera.

Diana was described as "unbelievable", the Prince of Wales "wooden", the Duke of Edinburgh "stiff", and even the Queen "unconvincing".

The dialogue too came in for criticism with Charles and Diana's phone conversations being singled out as "childish, embarrassing and incredible".

The general verdict was that the Royal Family bore no resemblance at all to the dignified actors who played them on Sky TV.

David Threlfall is $57,000 richer.

HEROIC PAIR STOP BEFORE REACHING TARGET

by Our Antarctic Staff **Captain Selina Scott and David Frostbite**

SIR RANULPH Tittleton-Whistleton-Simpleton Major (49) today abandoned his attempt to discover the light at the end of the tunnel.

Standing alongside his fellow failed explorer, Dr Norman "Bottles" Lamont, he explained: "It was all going very badly from the start. The conditions were appalling and we were driven off course by unforeseen circumstances".

Black Ice Wednesday

Lamont, who dragged behind him nothing more than a huge plastic bag containing essential supplies of Raffles cigarettes and cheap Thresher's wine, said: "I have no regrets. We did the worst we could".

ON OTHER PAGES

"Why do we love failures?" by Linda Lee Dennis Potter.

Copyright All Newspapers

THIS SICK SOCIETY

This society is sick.
That is the only word that describes a society that has become sick.
Make no mistake. We live today in a sick society.
And it is getting sicker by the day.
If any single word could sum up our society today, it is the one word.
Sick.

Sick

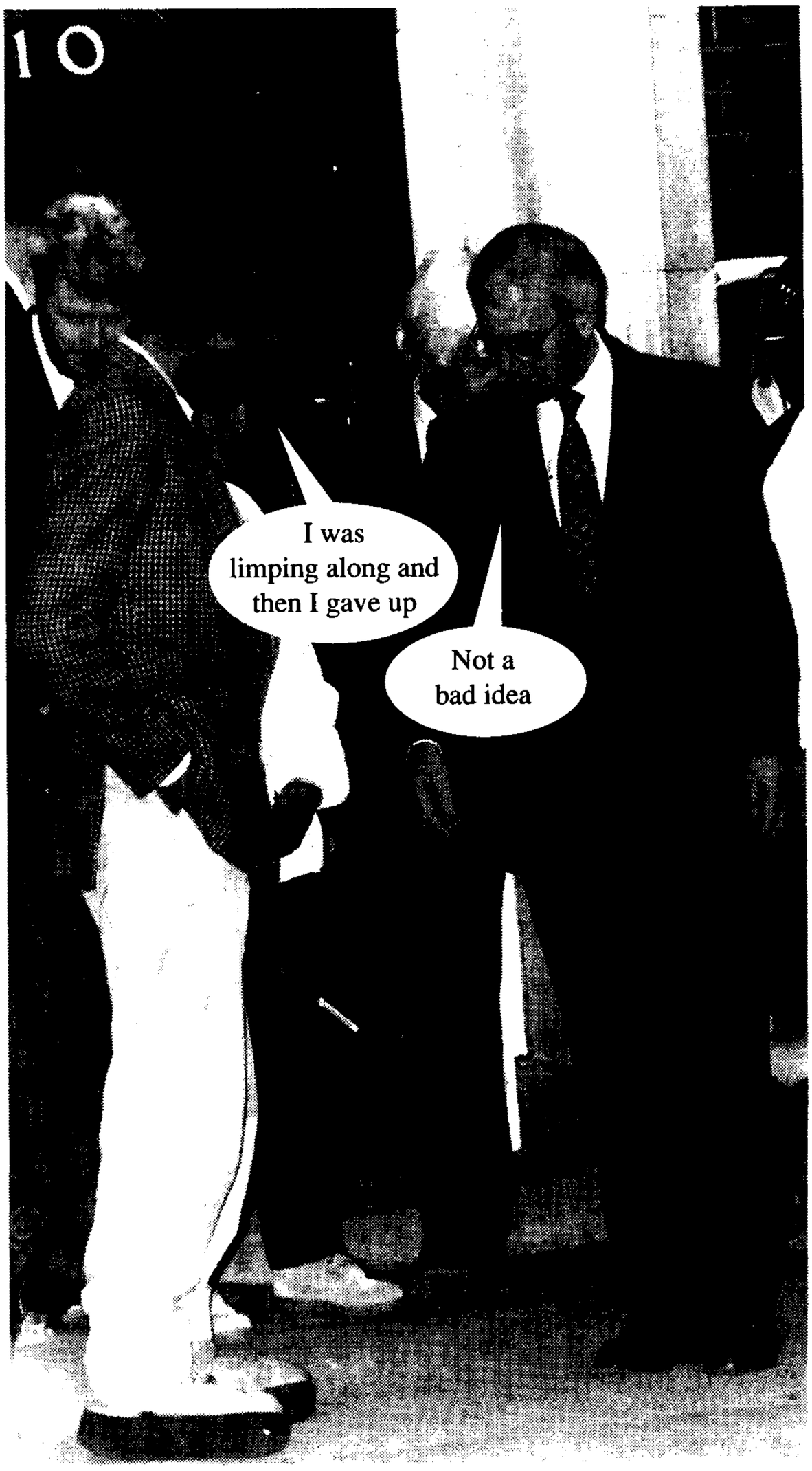
Anyone looking dispassionately at our society would have to conclude that it is sick.
That is the inevitable conclusion.
This is sick Britain 1993. And it is sick.

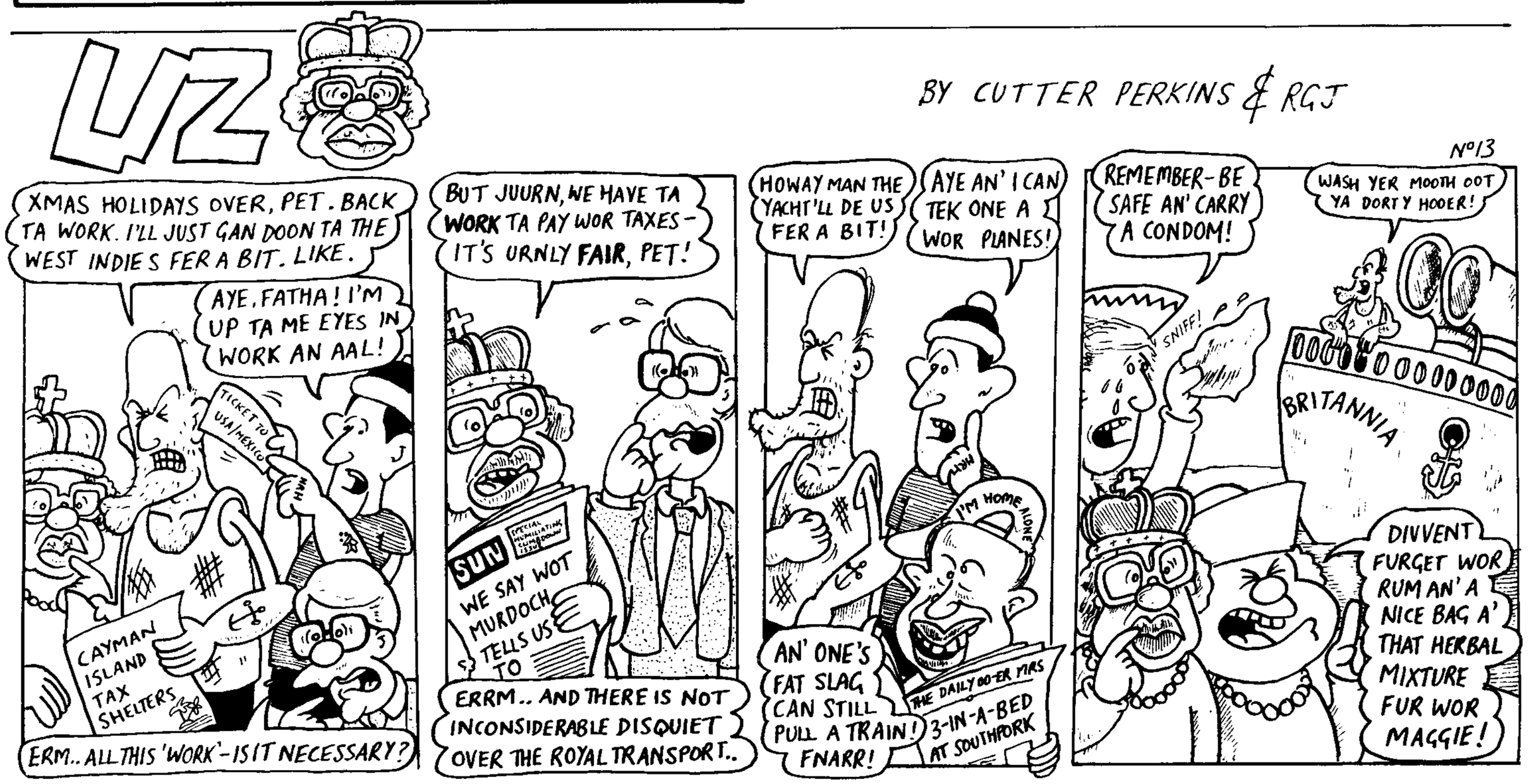
On Other Pages

"What has happened to Sick Britain?" asks **Paul Johnson** p. 3
"Whyohwhydoesthissortofthinghappen?" asks **A.N. Wilson** p. 4
"What is the matter with us?" by **Dr Anthony Skinner** p 7
"We are all to blame" says **Bishop Reg** p. 8
"Is it time for the Rope and the Birch?" asks **Sir Bufton Tufton** p. 9
"Your Letters" p. 10

Plus

Photos, pics, articles, features, reconstructions, more photos, interviews, profiles of Liverpool, etc, etc, etc.




UZ
BY CUTTER PERKINS & RGJ
Nº13
XMAS HOLIDAYS OVER, PET. BACK TA WORK. I'LL JUST GAN DOON TA THE WEST INDIES FER A BIT. LIKE.
AYE, FATHA! I'M UP TA ME EYES IN WORK AN AAL!
TICKET TO USA/MEXICO
CAYMAN ISLAND TAX SHELTERS
ERM.. ALL THIS 'WORK' - IS IT NECESSARY?
BUT JUURN, WE HAVE TA WORK TA PAY WOR TAXES - IT'S URNLY FAIR, PET!
SUN
WE SAY WOT MURDOCH TELLS US TO
ERRM.. AND THERE IS NOT INCONSIDERABLE DISQUIET OVER THE ROYAL TRANSPORT..
HOWAY MAN THE YACHT'LL DE US FER A BIT!
AYE AN' I CAN TEK ONE A WOR PLANES!
I'M HOME ALONE
AN' ONE'S FAT SLAG CAN STILL PULL A TRAIN! FNARR!
THE DAILY OO-ER MIRS
3-IN-A-BED AT SOUTHPORK
REMEMBER - BE SAFE AN' CARRY A CONDOM!
WASH YER MOOTH OOT YA DORTY HOOER!
SNIFF!
BRITANNIA
DIVVENT FURGET WOR RUM AN' A NICE BAG A' THAT HERBAL MIXTURE FUR WOR MAGGIE!

SUPERSTAR DENIES CHANGING COLOUR

by Our Showbiz Correspondent
Oprah Bamigboye

IN a heartrending television interview, internationally unknown superstar "Not Very Wacko" John Smith denied that he has deliberately changed colour over the last ten years.

He angrily hit out at media speculation that he turned from a normal pink to an almost unnatural deep blue.

Non Thriller

"I can't help it," he said. "It's a hereditary disease called Losing-thelectionitis which afflicts all leaders of the Labour party."

Sobbing uncontrollably into his onion, the uneccentric Scottish lawyer said:

"It's all lies. I'm proud to be a red man. I love our culture, our music, our voter. I have no desire to be blue."

At one point Oprah suggested that John Smith might in fact be mad, living in a fantasy world in Walworth Road with his pet monkey Gordon Brown.

John Smith was clearly embarrassed and turned an even deeper shade of blue.

Skinner Complaint

But fireworks really flew when the conversation turned to cosmetic surgery. Oprah claimed:

"You've reshaped your policies, had your left wing removed, 'tucked' Gerald Kaufman away, and implanted conservatism into your body politic."

At this John Smith completely lost his temper and insisted that from then on he only wanted to talk about his record, "I'm Bad".

Oprah Winfrey is 78 stone.

BEFORE

In the days of "Benn"

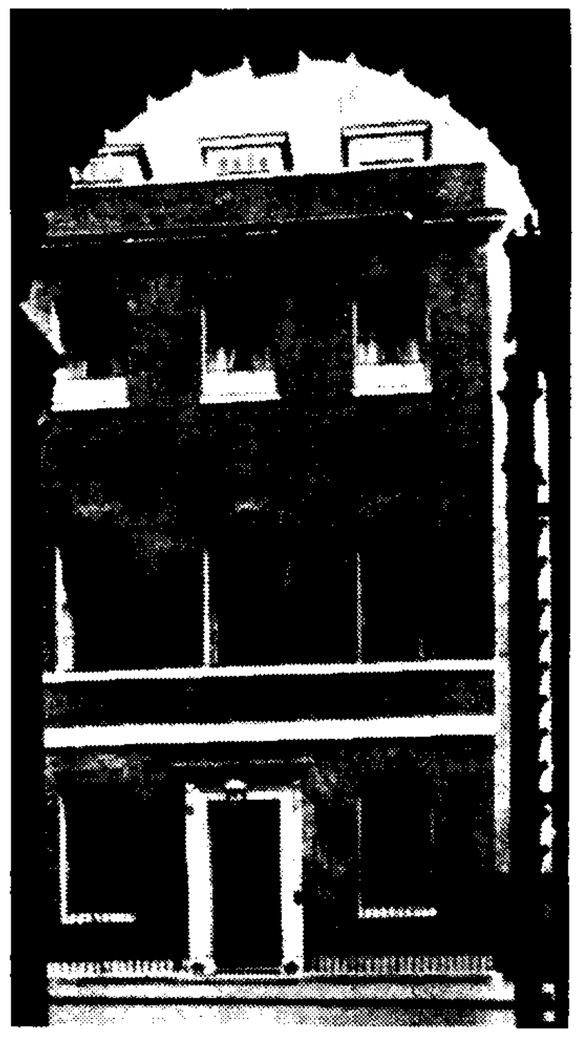
AFTER

During "Loonwalk"

"We find we get quicker results using the futon"

HOME ALONE COPYCAT SHOCK

by Our Social Affairs Staff
Polly Toytown



THERE has been another sad incident of the so-called "Home Alone" phenomenon in the centre of London, it was revealed yesterday.

The case involved a child being left entirely on his own in a large house in central Westminster.

A neighbour became suspicious when she saw a middle-aged woman drive away from the house two years ago and never return.

"He's been in there all that time, trying to do things for himself like run the country and ratify the Maastricht Treaty," the neighbour told social workers.

It has now been established that the boy is called John and is only 49 years old.

Yesterday he explained how the nice blonde lady he used to call "Mummy" had simply packed her bags and gone away.

"You're on your own now," she had told him. "I'm going round the world having a holiday and giving lectures on Democracy and Freedom."

Last night John was said to be lost and bewildered, and kept asking if the lady was coming back.

Contacted by reporters in America, John's so-called "Mummy" said: "It's all been a terrible mistake. I thought he would be all right. I should never have left him there. I must return to Downing Street at once."

Lady Thatcher is 93.

THE Sun

Friday, February 26, 1993

The Sun Says

SORRY

you can't take a joke

MA'AM

(you old bat)

OK, Your Maj. It's a fair cop.

We printed in good faith your Xmas speech. Wot, incidentally, we acquired in a total *bona fide* journalistic scoop — i.e. it was given to us by our mates on Sky TV.

We now realise, after receiving your lawyers' letter, we was wrong to do what we did, even though we was right, because your speech was, frankly, a boring load of bollox, excuse our French, Ma'am.

You have made a right royal gesture by agreeing to hand over some of your ill-gotten loot to the taxman.

And in a similar spirit of voluntary cooperation, i.e. we have to, the Sun has generously agreed to publish this apology and fork out a totally ridiculous pile of money to your horse-faced daughter's useless charity.

We hope you are now satisfied with your pound of flesh, Ma'am. But watch out. Cos we've got the dirt on you, hubby, and all the rest of your lot. Gorrit?

Your humble servant

X

Kelvin McFilth
(his mark)

ON OTHER PAGES

Why I Still Love Dirty Old Major Ron by Lesley Slagge p.2

Has Princess Di Got AIDS? p.3

Lord Linley Goes Bonking Crazy p.4

Sex-Op Edward Shocks Gazza p.5

"Sailor" Tim Gave Princess Anne Wedding Night Blues p.6

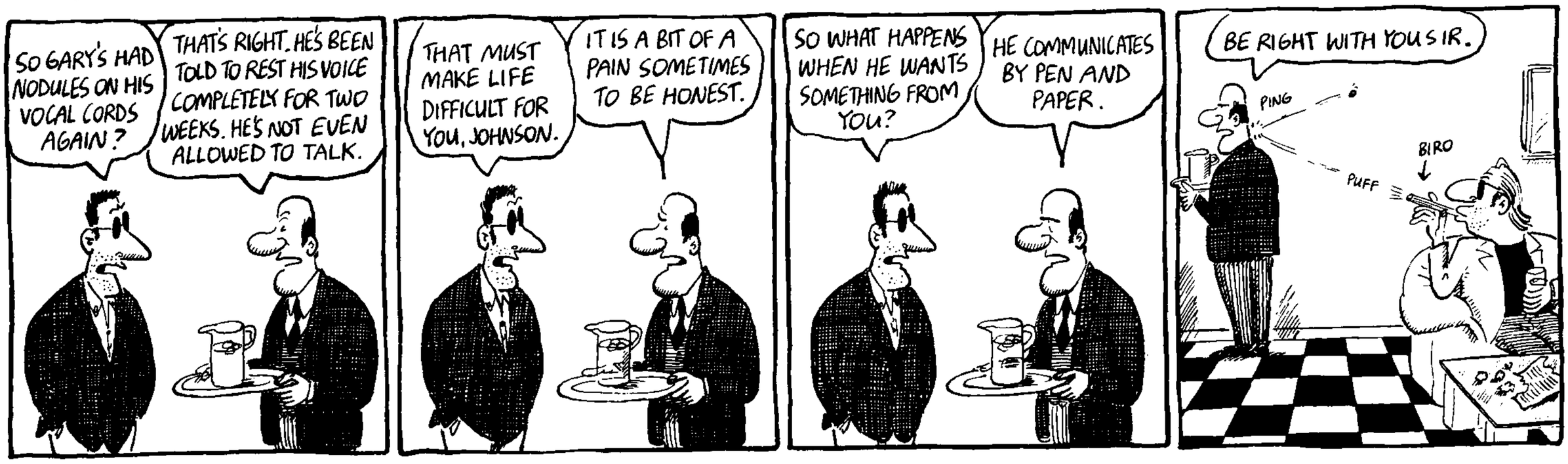
Should Lovejoy Be Britain's Next King?

Sun Phonevote Yes 0898 611 326

Remember — There's More Fun In The Sunday Independent!!!

Celeb

LIGGER


SO GARY'S HAD NODULES ON HIS VOCAL CORDS AGAIN?
THAT'S RIGHT. HE'S BEEN TOLD TO REST HIS VOICE COMPLETELY FOR TWO WEEKS. HE'S NOT EVEN ALLOWED TO TALK.
THAT MUST MAKE LIFE DIFFICULT FOR YOU, JOHNSON.
IT IS A BIT OF A PAIN SOMETIMES TO BE HONEST.
SO WHAT HAPPENS WHEN HE WANTS SOMETHING FROM YOU?
HE COMMUNICATES BY PEN AND PAPER.
BE RIGHT WITH YOU SIR.
PING
PUFF
BIRO

ROY TO BE SCRAPPED

by Our Art Staff
Desperate Dan Farson

THE WORLD of nostalgia will never be the same again. As from next month the long-running comic hero, Roy of the Hattersleys, is to be scrapped.

Said a spokesman: "Roy has become increasingly out of step with his readers and he has no relevance to the younger generation."

Dribble

Roy first appeared as a left-winger playing for the Labour Party, but moved to the centre and scored a number of spectacular own-goals in the seventies and eighties.

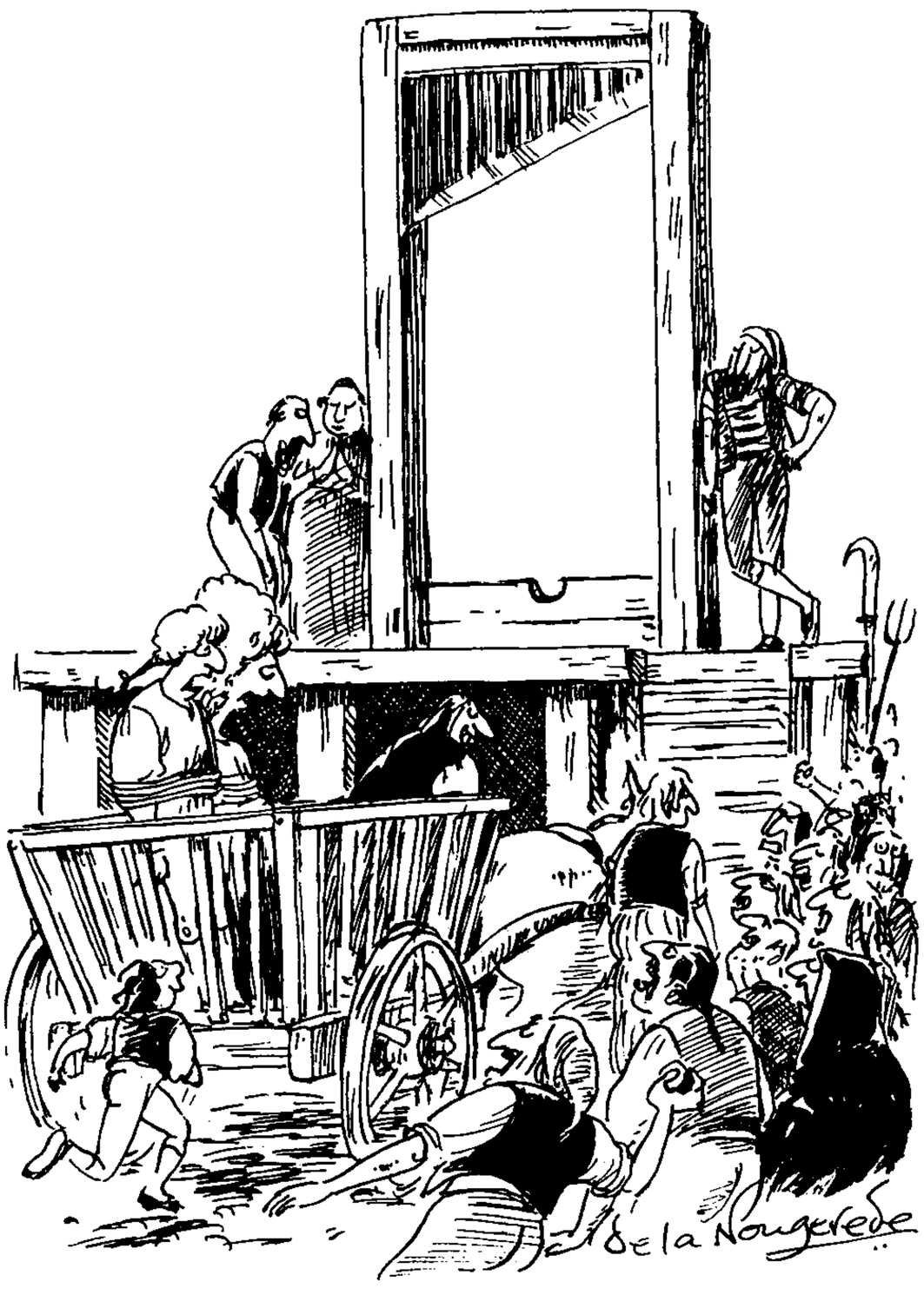
In later years he was increasingly to be found turning out for less prestigious outfits, including *Punch, The Listener, High Life* and more recently the *Guardian*.

However, his style belongs to another era. His exploits involving tram rides, his auntie's black pudding and supporting Sheffield Wednesday no longer entertain today's fans.

Yesterday Roy was unavailable for lunch *(shurely 'comment'? Ed)*

FOCUS ON ROY

Full name:	Roy of the Hattersleys
Club:	The Garrick
Birthplace:	Sheffield
Birthday:	Wednesday
Position:	Sitting down eating
Weight:	Over
Caps:	Cloth



"Things might have been worse, Marie – we might have been torn to pieces by the tabloids"

SELLAFIELD NO RISK – OFFICIAL

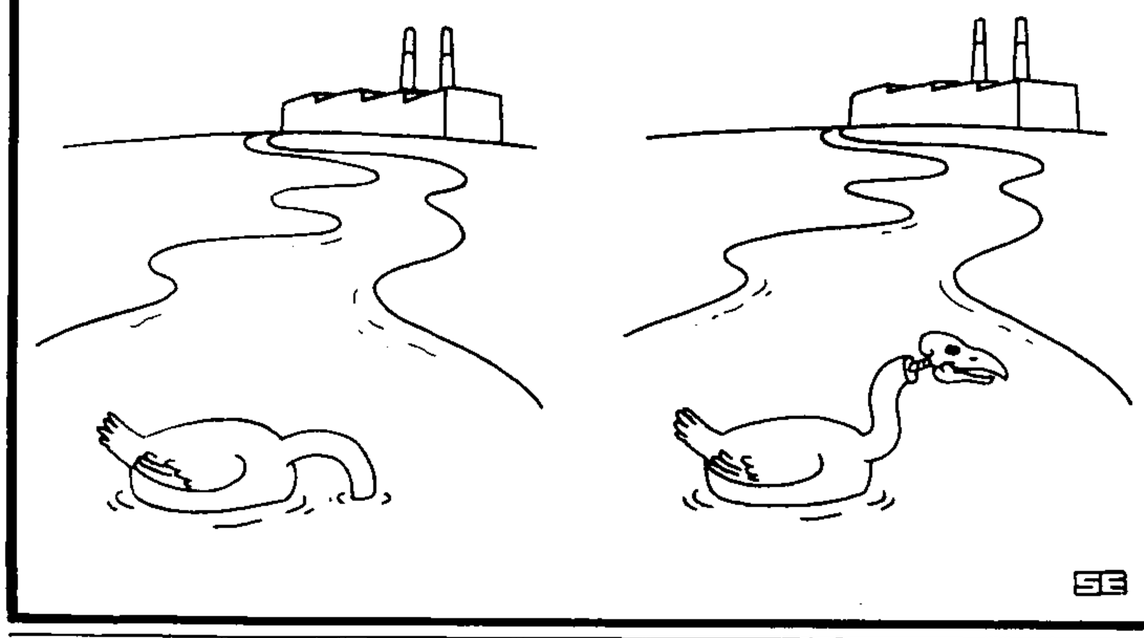
by Our Nuclear Energy Staff
B. Sizewell and E. Mission

THE NUCLEAR reprocessing plant at Sellafield has been given the all-clear by the Department of Trade after criticism of its safety record last week.

Said a spokesman for the DTI: "There is nothing to worry about. We have been here before and there is no cause for alarm. We have a long-established procedure for dealing with complaints about safety. What we do is, we simply change the name of the plant and then public confidence is immediately restored."

He continued, speaking from inside a lead suit: "When there was a problem at Windscale we solved it by renaming it 'Sellafield'. Now that there has been a problem at Sellafield, we will be changing the name again, this time to 'Chernobyl'."

Michael Heseltine is 69.



That MCC menu in full

Bombay Duck
Madras Duck
Calcutta Duck

— ❋ —

Mulligatallout Soup
Bindhi Gooch
Hasbindhi Gatting

— ❋ —

11 Prawns on a Dish (Sky)

— ❋ —

Chris Vindalewis
with
Jolly Good Chapatis
and
Pillock Rice

— ❋ —

Piss-Puris
Kapil Devilled Kidneys
with
Off-Spinach
Sag in Middle Order

— ❋ —

From The Trolley
Skittled Tail of Team (not very hot)
Sweet and Sour Grapes
Mango Back-to-the-Pavilion Chutney
Battered Side of Men

— ❋ —

To Follow On
More Ducks

— ❋ —

TV HIGHLIGHTS

HURD AND MAJOR

by P. G. Wodehouse

(Scene: The Drones Club. Oofy Garel-Jones is strumming "Maastricht They're Making Ayes At Me" on the ukulele, under potted palm)

MAJOR *(reading upside-down copy of the Daily Telegraph):* I say, Hurd, it says here we're going to lose the jolly old Maastricht vote, because all our chaps who are against the bally thing are going to vote in favour of the bit that *we're* against.

HURD: So it would seem, sir, from a perusal of the prints.

MAJOR: But dash it, Hurd, Johnny Smith's cloth-cap gang are going to vote against it, even though they are *for* the bit that *we're* against. What do you make of that?

HURD *(polishing fish with shirt tail):* It would indeed seem strange, sir.

MAJOR: So, if our bolshie brigade decide to join up with the sons of toil, then between them they could romp home at 10-1, leaving yours truly at the starting post with eggs all over his pyjamas.

HURD: That is what is being suggested by some, sir, as I understand it.

MAJOR: So, you mean — we bally well lose the whole damn caboodle, friend Maastricht is up the spout, and yours truly has to chuck it in, leaving Fatty Clark to take over the Reins of G?

HURD: If you say so, sir.

MAJOR: Well, don't just stand there polishing that fish, Hurd. It's time for you to come up with one of your brilliant schemes.

HURD: Well, sir, now you come to mention it, I have taken the precaution of consulting with one of the most eminent lawyers in London, and it seems that we have a way out of our constitutional dilemma.

MAJOR: We do, Hurd?

HURD: I am advised, sir, that, whatever the House of Commons decides, you will be legally entitled to ignore it.

MAJOR: By jove, Hurd, what a brilliant fellow you are. It must come from eating all that fish. Do you think that if I took up eating fish I'd become as brainy as you?

HURD *(smugly):* No, sir.

(Swallows fish)

ENDS

That legal advice in full

VERISHADEE, BENT & CROOKED

SOLICITORS AND COMMISSIONERS FOR OATHS

PARTNERS:
B.J.P VERISHADEE MRC (MADRAS)
R.L. BENT MA (OXON)
M.M. BENT
MRS R.Q. BENT
D. CROOKED (DECEASED)

OFFICES
BALHAM
& SEVEN SISTERS

Our Ref: TD/BJPV/OH

15 February 1993

Dear Mr Hurd:

We have now had an opportunity to cash your cheque and examine the enclosed Maastricht Treaty.

As per your instructions, we are pleased to find the following:

Article 26 presents no legal problem vis a vis the social chapter, it being clear that a Treaty, being ipso facto prima facie, does not require any post hoc parliamentary ratification whatsoever to alter its status with regard inter alia to other parties (see the case of Hitler vs Stalin, Queens Bench Court 1941).

We trust that this opinion will meet with your requirements and if it doesn't we can always change it.

Yours faithfully,

Tracy Dunwoody

Tracy Dunwoody
pp The Senior Partner

Where Are They Now?

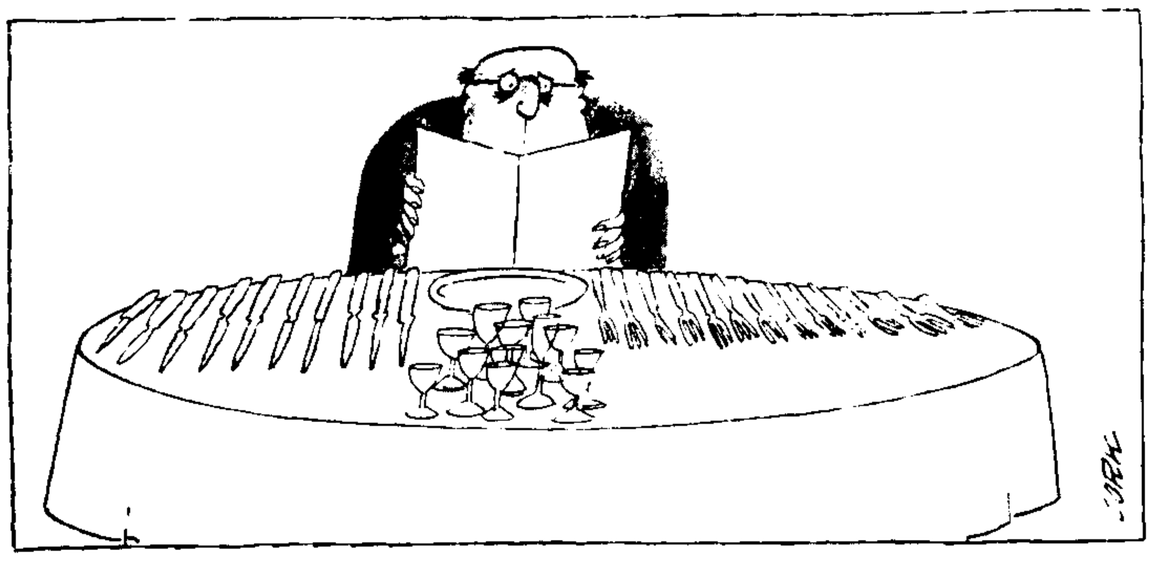
No. 94: **William Jefferson Airplane Clinton III**

In January 1993, the world was thrilled when a young man from Hope, Arkansas, became the 94th President of the United States.

With his attractive blonde wife, dark glasses and saxophone, President Airplane seemed to embody the hopes and aspirations of a whole new generation of American youth.

His first dazzling move was to appoint his wife, Mrs Hillary Anita Roddick Clinton Jefferson Airhead V, as Head of Government with full responsibility for everything.

He was never heard of again.



Her novel The Rector's Wife was topped in the paperback charts in Britain last year only by Jilly Cooper's Polo and Jeffrey Archer's As the Cow Flies. *South African Sunday Times*

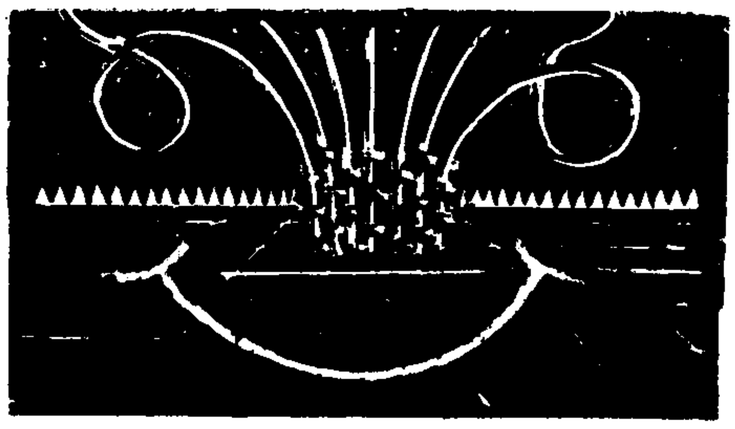
Monday 18 and Tuesday, January 19 at 8.15 pm
HOUSE ON THE SEA PRODUCTIONS

CANCELLED
DISAPPEARED

A new play by David Baldock

Harlow Playhouse

DIARY



FRIENDS OF SALMAN RUSHDIE

Salman, old buddy, old chum, I have thought of you often over the last few years: of how your own persecution for what you believe in is so like my own. The writer's life is one of paranoia and mayhem, dammit, and I guess that's the price we pay. You know, Salman, my old prize-fighter, when I think of you, I think of my own arm-wrestling with the daemons of governments and of my struggle in that most ungovernable and terrifying terrain — the imagination — and of how I overcame both these forces through sheer bloody spunk and sweat. Shucks, some people didn't know just how tough it was to be a writer before you and I came along, Salman, old bean. Now, looking at you, they can have a fresh understanding of writers like me. Brave it out, old trout, and when you finally emerge from your solitary martyrdom, I'm gonna straightaway place my new book — 1500 pages on the Jansenist heresy set in Ancient Greece, told by a dyslexic castrato, half in Esperanto, half in Catalan — in those world-weary yet hopeful hands of yours. And as I watch you read it word by word, from cover to cover, I know I'll be witnessing a man tasting his joyous sips of true freedom. So my best to you, old pardner, wherever you are ensconced, and may my muses embrace you.

Norman Mailer

Dear Salman, To me, you're more than a man called Sal, because what you Sell Man is something indeed to Rush and Die for. You uphold the *beacon* of hope because where you are holed-up no *bee can* hop. You have introduced the word *fatwa* into our language, and a *fatwa* lot of good it's done us. I think of you shooed into solitude, just as the mischievous dog thinks of his master's shoe and the sole-'e-chewed. Like the best of us, you have suffered for your art: how much easier it would be if we could have (p)arted with our supper.

Yours sincerely, because you are so sincerely you,

Clive James

Remember, Salman, how we were once sitting together talking about literature, its magic, its ability to transform our world into something *other*, and how marvellous life was, and love was, and I was, and how you said to me, "I love your new play, Arnold, and I advise everyone out there to go and see it — it's without doubt a modern masterpiece, and much better than anything I could've written myself"? Perhaps you don't. Perhaps you'll say you never met me — but too bad, you can't answer back, that's the awful thing about this fatwa! News from the real world must be more important than ever to you now, Salman, shut away as you are. So I know you'll want to know that I am speaking at various prestigious Literature Festivals throughout the North of England in the next few months. Do drop by if you're in the area: I'd dearly love to share all my latest ideas with you.

Arnold Wesker

Dearest Salman, Though I have never met you, I feel you know me.

You are the outcast. So am I. For I am a high-earning divorced woman novelist. A quadruple paradox. And it makes me hated and shunned by our society. If they could kill me, they would. Yet you have men day-and-night guarding you, and I am all alone in our urban wilderness. Such is the lot of woman.

Can I offer some advice to help you get through your ordeal? It's advice women like me have to take every single day of our lives. For we are prisoners like you.

Go out and get your hair done. It can make you feel a million dollars.

Curl up in bed with a super book and a nice box of choccies. Lovely.

Listen to some of your favourite music on the gramophone and sing along at the top of your voice.

Phone an old friend for a jolly good gossip.

And remember, Salman: life is a peanut. Sometimes ready salted, and sometimes not. Sometimes in a bag. And sometimes already laid out on a dish. But always there to nibble if you're feeling frightfully naughty.

With warmest regards. Think of me.

Fay Weldon

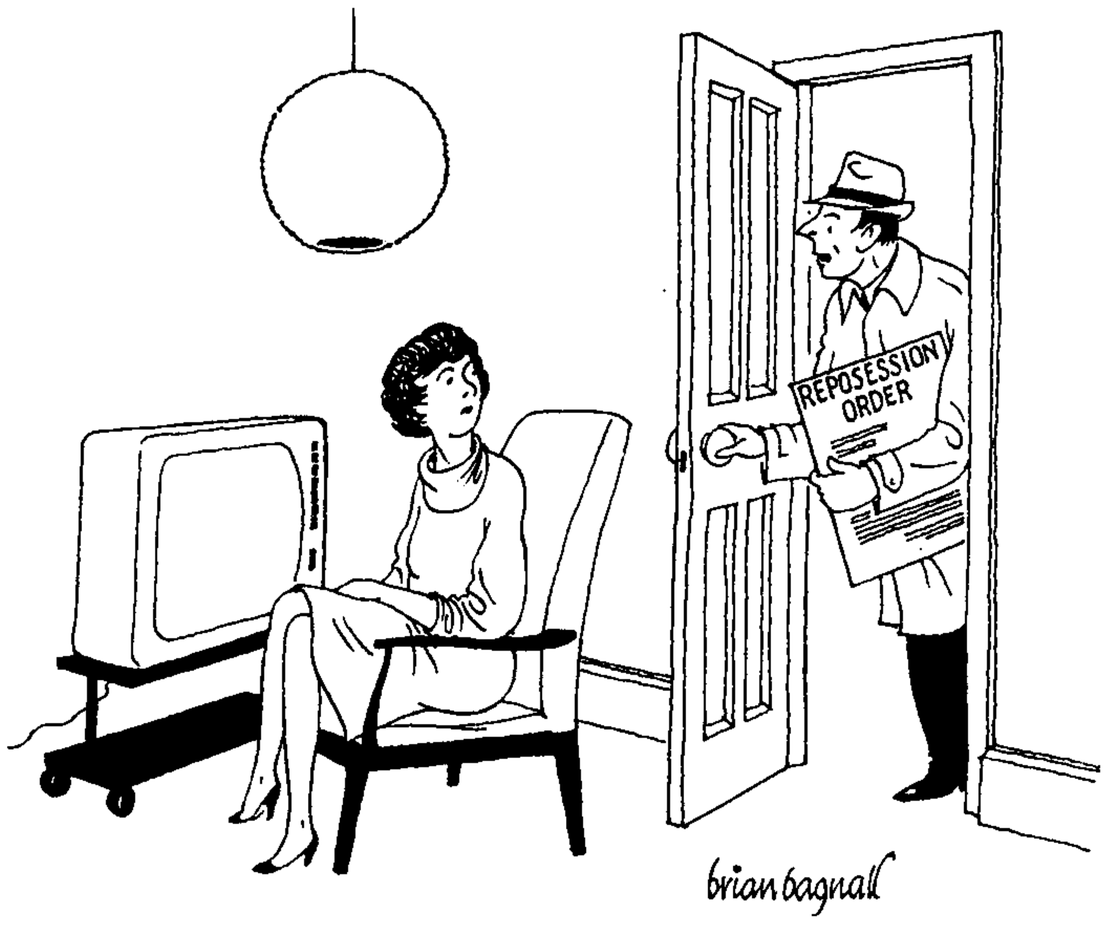
My Dear Salman, As you are only too well aware I have been unashamedly unequivocal in my support for you during this least efficacious of ordeals, whilst nevertheless being profoundly mindful of the very great hurt you have caused a number of my very good friends in the Asian community — ordinary, decent citizens for whom the taking of another life — though wholly repugnant under normal conditions — would, within this context, be profoundly understandable.

I always maintain that it is the hallmark of the fully-paid-up member of the human race that the luxury of persecution must be paid for with a sense of remorse on the part of the persecuted.

Let us not for one moment beat around the clump of shrubs containing stems of moderate length. Those of us who have assuaged our hard-pressed bank-managers by earning a nutritious crust from our collected jottings have a duty to those who have never enjoyed the pleasures of verbiage to respect their higher feelings. A solitary life under threat of death seems to me inadequate remuneration for indignities heaped on an oppressed minority by any highly-paid author. As you are aware, Salman, you have my absolute support; however, if you should so decide — of your own volition, let me hasten to add! — to surrender your person to the goodly burghers of Iran, then that would be not only a courageous gesture but a courteous response to a very real problem.

Yours in the struggle for free speech (with responsibility),

Roy Hattersley



"Honey, we're homeless"

Keith Fletcher, the England team manager, defended his players by saying: "I do not see how you can go through India and not eat Chinese food.

The Times

Pope to Benin

Rome: The Pope arrives in Africa today, visiting Benin, where he will meet practitioners of voodoo, Uganda and Sudan.

The Times

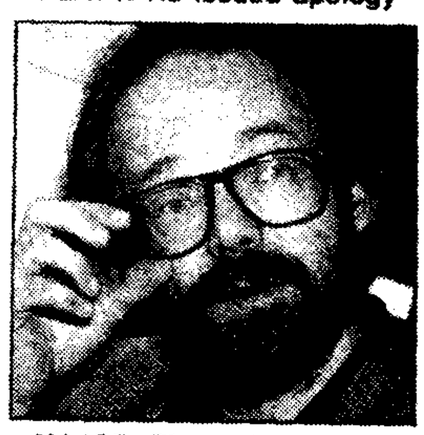
In addition to a full programme of esoteric events regular cultural trips will be arranged to visit the wonders of Renaissance art and architecture:

- ★ **The leaning Tower of Pizza**
- ★ **Uffizi Gallery** *(the oldest art gallery in Europe)*

Brochure

Daily Express

PLATT: He issued apology



MAJOR: Pleased at victory

Literary Review

Sick characters who found their author

The Shrine of Jeffrey Dahmer
Brian Masters
(Hodder, £14.99)

"IT'S JUST a sick, pathetic, wretched, miserable life story, that's all it is. How it can help anyone, I've no idea." So Jeffrey Dahmer, the Milwaukee mass-murderer, said about himself after he'd been caught.

Brian Masters begs to differ. He just loves Dahmer's story — loves it to bits. As a dupe of that crank Colin Wilson, Masters believes that Dahmer, like other murderers, has much to teach us. He believes, in fact, that Dahmer — murderer, necrophile and cannibal — could show the rest of us a few things. "Dahmer's crimes permitted him to act, for a moment, at a higher level of intensity than is given to ordinary folk with ordinary joys," he says admiringly on the one hand, patronisingly on the other.

The Shrine of Jeffrey Dahmer is an interesting book, although not quite in the way Masters intended it. For what we have here is not so much an analysis of a pathology, as a collision between two pathologies — Masters's, as well as Dahmer's. The text that has resulted is best viewed as itself an exhibit, the product of warped thinking by its author as well as its subject, a sort of long-range *folie-à-deux*.

Ghoulish accounts of murder have always been popular, of course. There's no mystery about it. Heads turn eagerly as people drive slowly by the site of a car wreck or a plane crash. But Masters doesn't accept that he is part of that gross trade.

As a howling snob, he used to write books about duchesses (literally), you see. Then along came Dennis Nilsen. Masters pathetically says that what first attracted him to Nilsen was that, when he was sent for trial, he seemed to be carrying a copy of the complete works of Shakespeare. A Hintellectual! Well worth a biography, then.

"I treated it just as I treated the Duchess of Devonshire," he has claimed, "as just another job of work." Actually what had attracted him was the nature of Nilsen's crimes. Masters showed startling empathy with Nilsen's feelings, as he kept corpses of his victims for "company". Had Nilsen murdered girls, rather than boys, he would doubtless not have been so fascinated. It's to Masters's credit that *Killing for Company* is nonetheless a relatively restrained and balanced production.

Masters's own muddled preoccupations came to light when, five years later, he published a painful little memoir called *Gary*, about his own attempt to keep a boy with him. He had adopted a 13-year-old delinquent he had met in the street, with charitable intentions but also for his own satisfaction, "taking on the exquisite exhilarating enchantment of responsibility for a young life without having worked for it". The relationship came to grief.

No analogy between this benevolent enterprise and Nilsen's ghastly crimes seems to have occurred to him, even though he quotes himself saying pompously to some suspicious education inspectors: "Were there no homosexual element in my emotional furniture it is doubtful that I would have noticed the boy at all. I invite you to consider that you might be glad to acknowledge the unheralded benefits of a homophilic trait..."

Were there no homosexual element in Masters's emotional furniture, it is doubtful he would have noticed Jeffrey Dahmer at all. As it is, he has written here an account of his life and deeds that is systematically biased in Dahmer's favour and against everybody else: his parents, the police, judges, lawyers, psychiatrists. Again and again, his words betray his real sympathies, his deep identification with Dahmer. It's a cacophony of wrong notes.

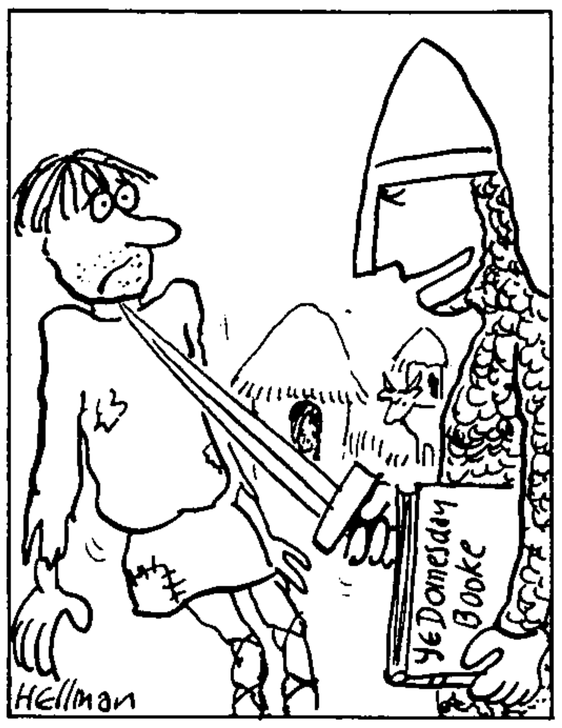
When Dahmer had already committed his first murder and a day or two later masturbates over the victim's severed head, Masters writes lyrically: "As he stood there, moving his hand towards the artificial restoration of peace, the boy of 18 in a solitary house in the quiet Ohio countryside took his first step towards madness." When Dahmer does disgusting things, Masters takes care to describe them as favourably as possible. "Dismemberment was unpleasant and messy, but it was the only practical option open to him." That's all right then! When Dahmer molests a corpse, Masters calls it a "cuddle". When Dahmer describes himself as "thoroughly corrupt and evil", Masters protests. "Perhaps the tiniest chink of light still danced upon his soul from time to time," he suggests winsomely.

Masters's expressions of horror are reserved for Dahmer's prosecutors. After conviction, American law allowed one relative of each man to express his or her feelings to the judge in open court before sentence was passed. Masters is repelled by this, as he has never been by Dahmer's atrocities. "Barbaric", he calls it, a "rough medieval spectacle", "this hurtful charade", "this distasteful exercise", "it is surprising that it should be tolerated," he chides.

Throughout he has relied on Dahmer's own version, as though he were trustworthy, and omitted much that is unflattering. A glance at one of the downmarket versions of the story, *Jeffrey Dahmer* by Dr Joel Norris (Constable, $4.99), shows that Dahmer was a vicious racist, which may have something to do with the fact that nearly all his victims were black. But there's no mention of this in Masters, just as he edits out Dahmer's most repulsive deeds, murmuring "the reader will be spared relentless repetition of these increasingly tragic events".

Trying to reassure himself, Masters repeatedly maintains that the predilection Dahmer and Nilsen shared for dead bodies is not so abnormal. It's all a matter of differences of degree, not of kind, he insists. "The desire to behave in a necrophilic manner is far more widespread than most people will care to admit," he believes. "There are brothels in Paris wherein the whore will obligingly make herself up to look corpse-like and lie in a coffin waiting to be ravaged; such places do not want for customers," he reports knowledgeably. "Less overt is the man who asks his wife to 'play dead' and keep quiet while he performs the act of love without her assistance; I know some happily married women who are pleased to gratify their spouses in this way and simply be 'taken'."

Speak for yourself, Brian. But then, you have, haven't you?



"Well, if you must know, we're setting up an on-line open-access socio-economic land use central database... Any objections?

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

☐ AT THIS year's "Nibbies", aka the British Book Awards, Neil Kinnock presented the author of the year award to Andrew Morton.

Dear old Neil, in his new role as lovable celebrity, announced before the assembled mafia of 600 book trade veterans that he was "asked just to say a few words — I am going to say just three: value added tax."

How surprising it was, then, that Kinnochio should chunter on about how "noxious, regressive and malicious" the tax on books would be, and how gratified he must have been by the enthusiastic applause of the converted. Why, Neil might have become prime minister had the electorate consisted exclusively of people opposed to paying more tax (*Shurely shome mishtake? Ed.*)

The mystery of the Nibbies is how the winners are chosen. Fred Newman, editor of *Publishing News* **which organises the annual junket at the Royal Lancaster Hotel (whose wine is the vilest in London), declines to publish the rules. It is all done, so it is suggested, behind closed doors, on the phone, cabals at work, etc. Somehow a winner emerges after a discreet and time-consuming process.**

Yet why did everybody assume that Morton's forked tongue would win, as last year everybody knew that Peter Mayle would hit the jackpot? Because the Nibbies is an unashamedly trade event, given spurious glamour by Frank Delaney as the smoothest talking of MCs, and *Diana: Her Story* **sold more copies than other books, as** *A Year in Provence* **did the year before. Simple, really.**

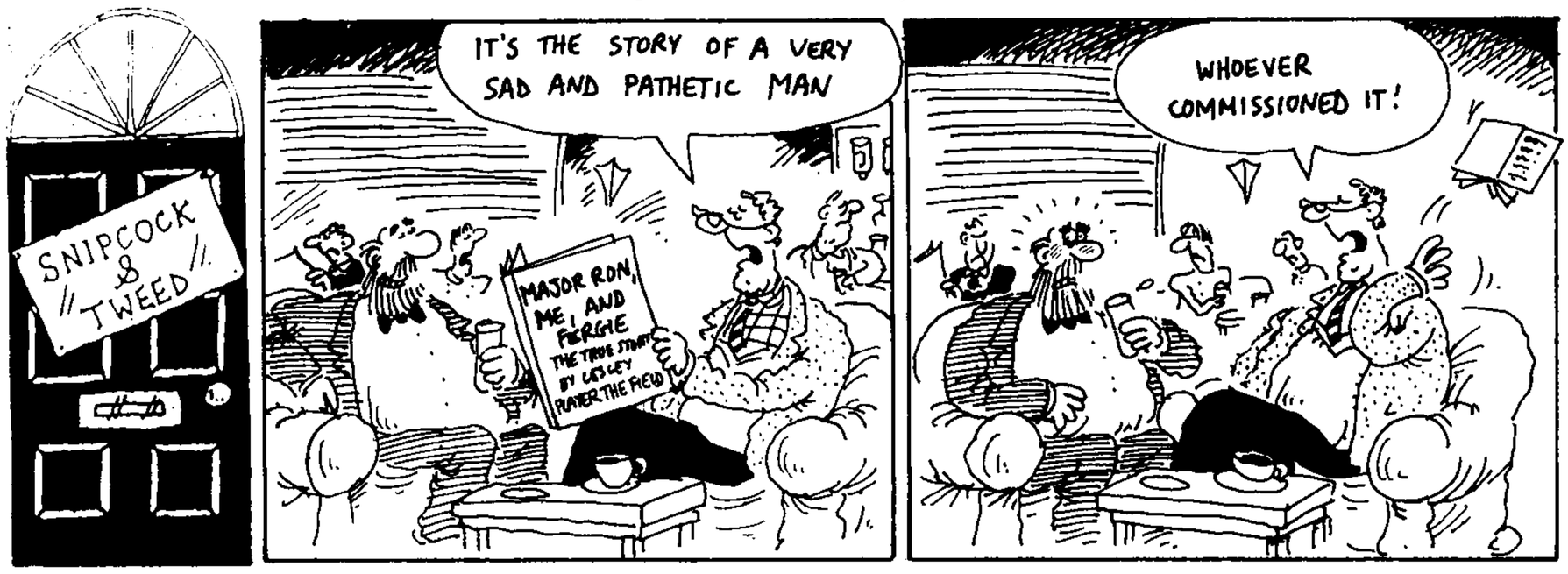
■ THE MOST obvious name missing from this year's Best of Young British Novelists list is that of Adam Thorpe, whose dense first novel *Ulverton* also mysteriously missed the Booker shortlist.

Thorpe's name was removed at the last minute as two of the four selectors insisted they'd resign if he were chosen.

Bearded Bill Buford, the genius behind the list, added the name of Anne Billson, who hadn't at the time published a novel. Now she has. *Suckers* has been almost universally slaughtered by the critics, which might not have happened had its author not been granted best-of-British status.

Poor Billson had a feeling her vampire book might not benefit from over-literary status. When asked by Salman Rushdie if he could read it, she worriedly repeated: "It's not that kind of book. It's not that kind of book."

'Bookworm'



ENERGY

Public inconvenience

THE STORY of the government's investigation into renewable energy by an "independent" group of scientists grows ever stranger as it is revealed that the new person chosen to chair the group is the least suitable for the job.

Dr Martin Holdgate has disclosed in a disarmingly frank talk to a cross-party group of backbenchers that he had been unable to attend *any* of the group's discussions in the 12 months before his appointment as chairman.

He told the parliamentary alternative energy group that he worked fulltime in Switzerland "and the timetable for the group's meetings did not coincide with my visits to the United Kingdom". In addition: "I am not a specialist in energy technology of any kind. I am a biologist."

So why was he picked? The department of trade and industry plainly wanted someone who would not interfere with the report it was drawing up, which said — surprise, surprise — that we could expect only a minor contribution to be made by renewable energy this century. Anything more radical would have raised a demand for money.

The group's first chairman was energy minister Colin Moynihan; and when he lost his seat at the election the role should have gone to his successor, street-fighting Tim Eggar. But Eggar did not share Moynihan's enthusiasm for promoting new energy sources: he is a merchant banker who is keen on helping the international oil companies.

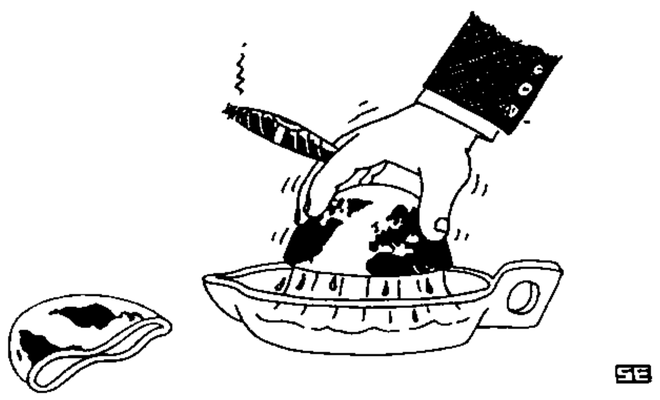
In fact, *any* of the group's nine other members would have been more suitable than Holdgate — as even he would agree. He said it was the others who had "provided the technological and industrial expertise". But someone somewhere decided otherwise.

Dr Holdgate's talk to MPs started as a factual summary of the group's already published recommendations, but he then changed gear. With a blaze of passion he talked about his own pet subject — global warming — and as director of the International Union for Conservation of Nature he has strong, radical views on this which may soon prove embarrassing in Whitehall if he ever calls for action.

One of his fellow members was Professor Peter Oppenheimer, student (ie fellow) in economics at Christ Church, Oxford. It is he who could and should have challenged the absurd imposition of high discount rates, which makes renewables appear costly (see *Eyes passim*). But the professor also has another role which was not mentioned in his CV when the study of renewables was launched. He is chairman of a company called Caminus Energy — which itself is employed by the government in profitable research.

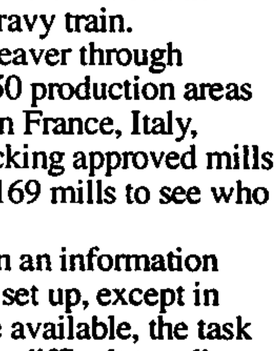
Caminus Energy was commissioned by Michael Heseltine to survey the market for coal when he was wrestling with backbench MPs, the select committee and the public to prove that he needed to close 31 pits. The report did what Hezza wanted. As he wrote triumphantly to Richard Caborn, chairman of the select committee on trade and industry: "The Caminus report confirms that the market for British Coal output will decline sharply from its present size."

Doubtless both Caminus and the professor acted honorably. But it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for the professor to challenge the way the DTI does its calculations when his own company is enjoying and seeking offices of benefit from government based on that very discounting method which is weighted against investment in new, non-polluting sources of energy. How convenient for the government...



BRUSSELS SPROUTS

Stuffed over olives...



THE *Eye* has uncovered more murky dealings involving huge payments made to olive tree growers and oil producers via the community agricultural policy (CAP).

The European Community produces 80 percent of the world's olive oil — around 1.44 million tonnes a year — so it was prudent of the Eurocrats at the commission in Brussels to check their spending on olive oil, which increased from 603 million ECUs (about £300 million) in 1986 to 1,960 million ECUs (about £900 million) in 1991, the latest date for which figures are available.

But requests from the court of auditors, the EC watchdog, for information fell on stony ground at the International Olive Oil Council (IOOC) in Madrid. The IOOC, an offshoot of the UN, has its own international auditors and publishes annual accounts, but it did not intend to let the auditors' little tank engine shunt into its own giant gravy train.

Instead, the auditors had to beaver through mountains of documents from 650 production areas and 395 producer organisations in France, Italy, Portugal, Greece and Spain, checking approved mills and milling certificates from 14,169 mills to see who was entitled to official CAP aid.

Since controls were reliant on an information database which had not yet been set up, except in Italy, and no control reports were available, the task was daunting, especially as it was difficult to tell which olive came from which tree and whether the subsidy was paid for the tree or the oil.

Moreover, producer organisations in Greece, Spain and Portugal tended to confuse those responsible for processing the funds with those who doled them out. Portugal did not even have a proper list of the members of its organisation, while Spain elected the same official for both jobs.

"The fact that some of the producer organisations visited did not maintain separate bank accounts from their unions of cooperatives meant that there was no segregation of revenue and expenses associated with administering the aid," the auditors observed. To their amazement, Greece did not even submit proper bank statements and discontinued its aid checks in 1987, the date they became operational, omitting to use the computerised files available.

The lack of land registers in Greece and northern Portugal was another surprising omission. Spain did have one but it was 50 years out of date and practically useless, most notably in its chief olive producing province of Jaen. A further absence of olive oil registers made it impossible to detect whether payments had been made more than once. In Corfu, for example, the total quantity of olive oil paid for on a flat rate basis was three times the oil actually produced.

This confused state of affairs was worsened by delays of up to three years in registering changes of ownership or in the number of trees cultivated. It was hardly surprising, then, that 30 percent of the producers inspected declared an average number of olive tress in excess of the true figure of 2,000 trees per producer — "resulting in average undue amounts of aid claimed of approximately 45 million litres per producer" and an "overdeclaration of the number of productive trees by some 40 percent".

Such fraud is not new: in 1984 an urgent request was made by MEP Eisso Woltjer to the commission to amend the olive oil regulations to prevent further fraud. The commission replied that information was confidential and could not be disclosed, but that it was setting up a group of national inspectors. Three years later a committee of the agriculture, fisheries and food commission urged the Euro parliament to set up a national supervisory agency.

Such checks by national supervisory bodies, such as agriculture ministries, have proved ineffective, although data submitted by them to national governments (who themselves apply to the EC for the aid) is later verified by government and EC inspectors. On the spot visits by control agencies in the last four years revealed that out of 5,500 producers (only 0.25 percent), half had not been included in the oil cultivation register.

In their final conclusion the auditors declared that 20 years after the commission had been "tinkering" with the production of the aid system it was still unreliable, and the commission "must share responsibility for the unsatisfactory situation". "In the court's opinion the essential elements of a reliable system are unlikely to be put in place either in the foreseeable future or at reasonable cost."

BANKERS

Insolvent abuse

MORE disturbing questions have emerged concerning the hugely profitable world (for some) of insolvency: in particular, the role played by Barclays bank and accountants Ernst and Young in the 1988 liquidation of the Manchester-based J.S. Bass group.

J. S. Bass had banked with Barclays for more than 80 years when the bank called for an independent assessment of the company and its three subsidiaries. It called in Ernst and Young who, as the last *Eye* reported, took just 48 hours to commit its findings to paper. The findings have been consistently questioned by outside experts, of whom Professor Christer, head of operational research at Salford university, has been the most vociferous.

His analysis maintains that the group was asset rich and had a promising order book. The problems that existed were being dealt with by management, and the companies were generally in a viable state. Notwithstanding these findings — Ernst and Young never once asked to the see the company's future plans, even though they were readily available — Barclays put the company into liquidation, divesting 130 staff of their jobs and scattering the group's remaining assets in the direction of lawyers, liquidators and other insolvency vultures.

In October 1989, Companies House wrote to Ernst and Young asking to see the directors' statement of affairs concerning Southern and Darwent, a J.S. Bass subsidiary. On 16 November John Warren, the liquidator for Ernst and Young, wrote back: "I regret to advise you that despite repeated requests by the joint liquidator in this matter, the directors have failed to submit a sworn statement of affairs in this matter. No sworn statement of affairs had been laid before a meeting of the company's creditors."

This is very odd — particularly since the *Eye* has in its possession a copy of a receipt signed by Ernst and Young for the aforementioned document, which the firm appears to have received on 17 February 1989, *eight months* before Mr Warren's letter denying its existence.

Could Mr Warren have overlooked the statement? It would be a shame if he did, when one reads the notes attached to it. The directors say: "It is expected that the above figures represent a substantial undervaluation of Southern and Darwent... since where the directors have been able to check the accounts produced and circulated to the creditors prior to the creditors meeting of January 9th 1989, there has been found to be evidence of errors, misrepresentations and falsifications within the group accounts, all being negatively biased towards the company. In the case of Southern and Darwent, the limited checking which has been possible has revealed to the directors that quantities of stock were omitted from the account and that figures for the liabilities of Southern and Darwent have not been checked or validated by the directors because the administrators Ernst and Young and Barclays Bank jointly refuse the directors access to the necessary bank statements and invoices. Had this material been made available it is believed likely that further evidence of improper or bogus invoices discovered elsewhere would have come to light."

Last week solicitors acting for Barrie Chapman, the former managing director of J.S. Bass who now lives on income support, wrote to Ernst and Young asking why it had suggested to Companies House that their client had failed to submit a sworn statement of affairs when "the information which you have given appears to be wholly incorrect".

David Harris, of Neil Myerson's commercial litigation department, told the *Eye*: "We have serious concerns about the situation and are conducting a detailed investigation".

Watch this space.

NUKES

Aldermaston, Berks.

THE government's appointment of the Hunting-Brae consortium to run its nuclear warhead factory at Aldermaston will hardly reassure those who were hoping the facility would clean up its act in the near future.

An enduring problem at Aldermaston is the continuing lack of facilities to treat properly the lethal cocktail of radioactive and toxic wastes that arise from the plant's operations. Fifteen years after an independent inquiry recommended the urgent construction of a treatment plant for solid wastes and a compaction plant for large contaminated items, neither project is yet on the drawing board.

Confidence that the new private manager will expedite matters cannot be high. The construction specialist in Hunting-Brae is Brown & Root, the giant US contractor with a less-than-exemplary record when it comes to the timely delivery of projects in the nuclear industry.

The company's promotional literature is no doubt thin on references to the Commanche Peak nuclear power station, south-west of Dallas, Texas. B&R was the main contractor on the twin-reactor project, which was finally completed this year — 12 years late and at a cost of between $11bn and $12bn (against an original estimate of $800m).

Safety violations during the plant's construction led to the commissioning utility, TU Electric, being fined more than $500,000 by the US nuclear regulatory commission.

Thermal-vested interest?

THERE is growing acceptance in Whitehall that a public inquiry will have to be held before the government can allow the start-up of the Thorp (thermal oxide reprocessing) plant in Sellafield.

The date for letters of objection and approval has now closed, and staff at the pollution inspectorate are working through the 38,000 letters received. Opinions are said to be divided roughly 50/50, but four of the objectors are local authorities (Lancashire county council and Carlisle, Kendal and Penrith district councils), who are recognised as "statutory consultees". This means they have to be consulted before the government can go ahead, and their objections give weight to the call for an inquiry.

The local Sellafield newspaper, *Whitehaven News*, has reported that the department of the environment recognises that "if a hearing is held, people would be looking for a public inquiry". That could last six or 12 months and should be great fun. The alternative is for the government to declare the objections of no importance and steam ahead, as Michael Heseltine tried to do over coal mines. The principal minister concerned with Thorp, however, is Michael Howard, and he will not be unhappy at having a chance to show how much smoother an operator he is than Hezza.

Thorp has cost £2.8 billion to build, the money obtained from customers for reprocessing and then spent before the plant was ready. Its owner, British Nuclear Fuels Ltd (BNFL), says it is losing £2 million a week while the delay continues, and claims it would lose a further £2 billion if it defaulted on its contracts, plus 6,000 jobs. Unfortunately, the evidence BNFL offers to support its case is very short on credibility.

The economic model that "proved" cancellation of the project would cost £2 billion (which BNFL conveniently refused to publish on the grounds of customer confidentiality) was devised by Touche Ross, the international accounting firm that recently had a spot bother over a £120 million hole in the accounts of Trafalgar House. (John Roques, senior partner at Touche Ross, sits on the BNFL board as a non-executive director.)

Critics believe that BNFL would lose even more money if Thorp started operating and then had to be de-commissioned. BNFL says that would cost £900m, but critics say this is a huge under-estimate. Most ominously for BNFL, the treasury — the department that put an end to Margaret Thatcher's plan to build a family of pressurised water reactors — is backing the critics.

Thorp is designed to turn spent fuel rods into plutonium and uranium which can be used again. But uranium is plentiful and cheap, and plutonium has little use now because the world is moving away from the fast breeder reactors for which it is intended. It can always be used for weapons, of course, and offers the UK a flourishing export trade: if we want to sell atom bombs around the world, that is.

COAL

A real drip

THE run-up to publication of the government's delayed white paper on the coal industry is being marked by a drip-feed of leaks as rival camps test their ideas on politicians and the public.

The latest leak is the text of a letter from John Baker, the chief executive of National Power, to Michael Heseltine, president of the board of trade, which by coincidence dropped in the letter box of Arthur Scargill, the coal miner.

John Baker is of course unlucky with leaks. During the Hinkley Point inquiry things kept falling off his desk — like his revelations about the high cost of nuclear power — and finding their way to newsletters like *Power in Europe*, which happened to be equally sceptical of the official figures.

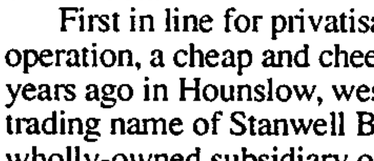
Baker had led the team from the old Central Electricity Generating Board which argued for two-and-a-half years at the Sizewell inquiry that nuclear power was the cheapest source of energy. But that did not prevent him from revealing exactly the opposite when the question of privatisation came up and he wanted to lose the nukes. They were accordingly removed from the package and Baker went on to get a rise from £76,000 to £347,000.

Now he is trying to fend off a requirement that he buy more British coal, and the request comes from a source it is hard for him to resist: his principal shareholder, the government, which owns 40 percent of National Power.

The easiest way for the government to reduce the size of the coal problem is to shut down temporarily the link with France for maintenance. It is not a question of breaking a contract — the present agreement to take electricity from the nationalised monopoly across the water expires at the end of March. The responsible body here is the National Grid Company, which last year made £260 million profit and does not want trouble with the government next time it seeks to put up a line of pylons.

As to the European Commission, the government has certainly been prepared to defy it in the past — for instance in August 1991 when it ignored a letter from Brussels saying that it could not go ahead with plans to build roads through beauty spots and John Major pretended that he had never received the letter. The government went ahead and Brussels climbed down. With the Maastricht issue bubbling over in Westminster, the EC would probably do the same again over a temporary break in the cross-Channel link.

LONDON BUSES



The tender trap

WHILE RAIL privatisation draws the fire, another barmy sell-off is gathering momentum outside the media spotlight: that of London Buses.

As the prospect of private sector involvement in the Jubilee underground line fades, the sale of London Buses will be the only way junior minister Steven Norris can get his name into the history books — as the man who destroyed 60 years of planned transport in the capital.

Readers outside London already know what bus deregulation and privatisation mean: declining service and standards. Now the same policy is to be inflicted on London.

First in line for privatisation is the Westlink operation, a cheap and cheerful outfit set up a few years ago in Hounslow, west London. Westlink is the trading name of Stanwell Buses Ltd, which itself is a wholly-owned subsidiary of London Buses. It has been dubbed "one of the most profitable parts of the London Buses empire". The claim is nonsense.

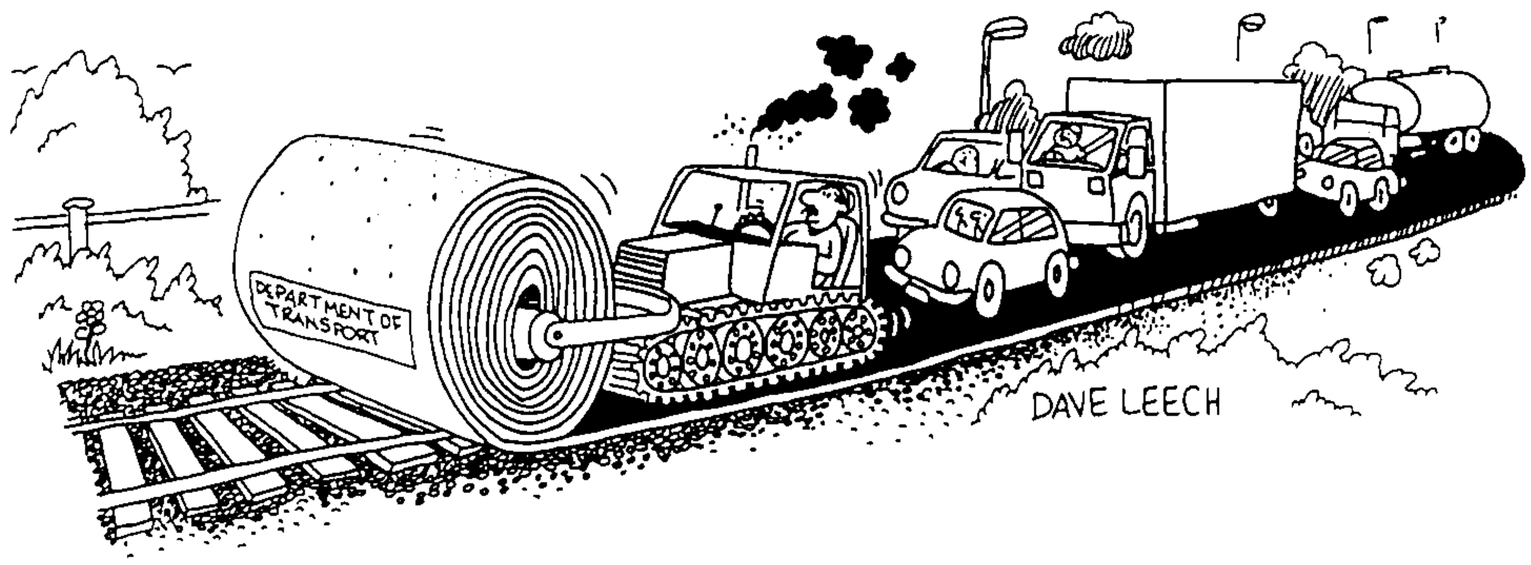
Westlink runs a motley collection of older Leyland National buses along with some newer "midibuses". Wages are lower than the norm, and its "arm's length" relationship with its London Buses parent means it does not have to contribute fully to its administrative costs. Turnover for 1991-92 was £5.4 million, which resulted in a modest trading surplus of £198,000. But this 3.6 percent "profit" came about because up until now all operating costs have been guaranteed through a bizarre tendering system.

All this changes in April, however, when "bidding for subsidy" comes into operation. Then, operators are guaranteed only a given subsidy, not the full operating costs. Westlink's profitability will look even less impressive.

With the treasury "discount rate" rules demanding an 8 percent return from public sector transport investment, it seems odd that the peripheral Westlink operation should be seen as the "plum" in this latest privatisation pie. In fact, none of London's bus routes can be described as "profitable": all rely heavily on revenue diverted to them from Travelcard and Bus Pass receipts — the fares taken on the buses often accounting for only 25 percent of total revenue.

Even with the added income from passes, however, few routes stand alone without subsidy. This painful lesson was learnt by the Docklands minibus operation which folded when it was excluded from the Travelcard network.

The prospects look bleak. Operators will have their fares controlled and will have to fight hard for funds from a squeezed Travelcard pot. Passengers, meanwhile, can expect far fewer buses on many marginal routes. As with rail privatisation, ministers are not prepared to make any commitment to preserving Travelcard's apportionments, but without them the whole system falls apart. When underground trains and buses in central London become even more crowded, and more travellers are forced to take to their cars on suburban roads, it will mark another triumph for the free market.



In the City

FRAUD TRIAL juries, we are told, would finish the job if given the tools: shorter trials, fewer charges, simpler offences, less defence obfuscation. For that reason there is, so the lawyers say, no need to accept Lord Roskill's draconian proposal that the 12 good persons should be replaced by a judge and two experts in complex cases.

But while the legal fraternity pays relentless lip service to the eternal justice of the jury system, the brutal reality is that often, though not as often as defence lawyers might wish, lengthy fraud trials dictate that jurors are a long way from being the peers of the slick, senior suits in the dock.

It is not surprising, therefore, when juries form a different view of both facts and law than experts whose judgement may not be clouded by the smoke screens defendants create and which judges fail to dispel.

Let us consider how different "juries" judged the events at the heart of Guinness Four, which ended last week with the acquittal of Thomas Ward, Ernest Saunders's legal hatchetman — latest in the endless *Nightmare on Elm Street* sequels for the Serious Farce Office (SFO).

After three charges had been dismissed by the trial judge for lack of evidence (why then did the SFO proceed with them?) Ward faced one charge of theft relating to the £5.2 million paid to a Jersey company on his behalf for helping win the battle for Distillers.

What members of the jury did not presumably know — because they were not allowed to be told — was that Saunders had been convicted of illegally paying the £5.2 million to his right hand man. As Ward was unavailable at the time of the Saunders trial in 1990, separate trials were inevitable. So Ward was acquitted of stealing the £5.2 million that Saunders had been convicted of paying to him! Such legal and logical absurdities are always a possibility when co-conspirators obtain separate trials. Arch-corrupter T. Dan Smith was acquitted of bribing Wandsworth council leader Sidney Sporle *after* Sporle had been jailed for six years for corruptly accepting payments from Smith and his paymaster John Poulson!

Such legal nonsenses are hardly the fault of juries if key facts are withheld. But now not only have two juries reached different verdicts over the £5.2 million, but last week's acquittal is also at odds with Ward being ordered by the high court to return the money to Guinness on the ground that it was an unlawful payment. On three occasions between 1987 and 1990 Ward failed to persuade judges that he was entitled to the money. Whether the jury was allowed to know this is also open to doubt.

In April 1987 the vice-chancellor Sir Nicolas Browne-Wilkinson, a senior judge, ruled that the payment "could not have been lawfully made". This was because the companies act required Ward to disclose the agreement for payment to a meeting of all the Guinness directors for their approval. The directors had never been told — therefore Ward had to repay. "Mr Ward had no single defence to the action." So much for a judge's view!

Ward appealed that ruling but was firmly knocked back by the court of appeal in May 1988. It found Ward to be "in breach of duty in failing to disclose his interest in the agreement to a meeting of the directors". Not only was such disclosure required by law, but also by the Guinness articles of association. "It was the case of a fiduciary who in plain disregard of his duty had improperly received the company's money... Mr Ward never had good title of the money."

Exactly the same verdict was reached by the law lords when they pronounced on the issue of the £5.2 million in February 1990. "Guinness's claim for repayment was unanswerable... he could not be excused from paying it back."

So nine judges — truly a jury of lawyer Ward's legal peers — found unanimously that he had no right to the money. Yet 12 lay jurors effectively found that he did.

It might be said that the criminal test of *mens rea* (guilty intent) was not relevant to the civil case and therefore that finding was not equivalent to a finding of guilt regarding theft. But it might be thought that judges (and Roskill-style assessors) might accept Dr Johnson's view that where secrecy goes roguery is not far behind. But as a veteran fraud investigator remarked: "Trials are not about finding out the truth. At the beginning both sides know the truth. One side is trying to get it out, the other is trying to prevent it coming out."

● All that remains now in the Guinness fiasco is publication of the long-completed report by the department of trade inspectors. They are believed to have found against most, if not all, the City players, including those like Ward, merchant bankers Roger Seelig and Lord Spens and stockbroker David Mayhew who were acquitted. Which makes even greater nonsense of Mayhew and Seelig being held "fit and proper" to continue in the City or be appointed directors of listed companies. But given the SFO's defeats, perhaps the DTI may yet have second thoughts about publication.

THE SFO also seems to be heading for further humiliation up in Wolverhampton at the marathon Eagle Trust trial. After more than eight months, three of the four defendants were recently acquitted. Former chairman John Ferriday alone now faces charges of presumably singlehandedly stealing almost £14 million. Another order of egg and humble pie coming up?

"TO HAVE AN outsider from industry tipping shares in a serious newspaper is completely against the tradition of financial journalism." That was the verdict of Nigel Lawson when City editor of the Sunday Telegraph on employing Jim Slater as "Capitalist".

Sadly for *Telegraph* readers, who became fodder for Slater's share-dealing profits, Lawson also concluded: "Jim Slater was so good that one simply could not turn him down." The rest is history — and those who do not learn from history repeat its mistakes. A Hegelian lesson awaits *Independent* editor Andreas Whittam Smith and business editor Christopher Huhne, who have hired the expert user of inside information and convicted criminal law breaker to write a weekly share-tipping column.

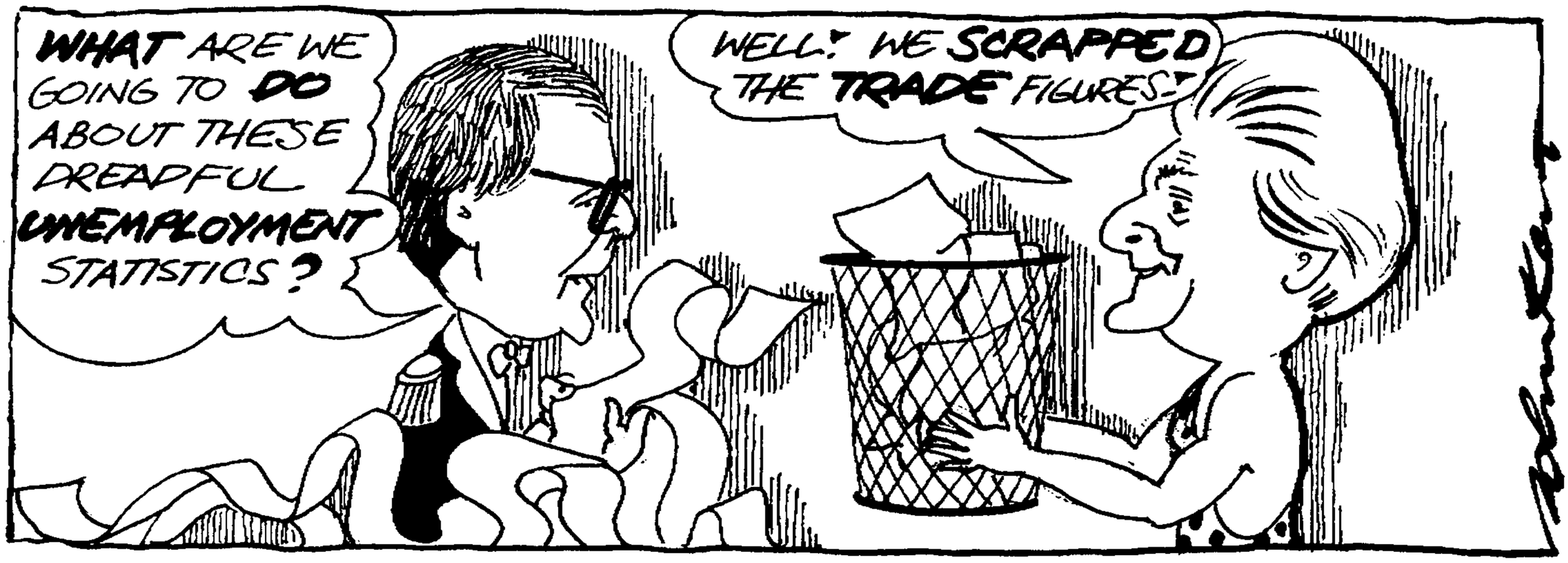
Indeed, so eager are they to have Slater on board that they have thrown overboard the *Independent*'s own strict and proper rules banning journalists from share-dealing. Slater, however, plays by his own rules, meekly accepted by the self-righteous Whittam Smith and Huhne. Not only can he deal in shares, but he can even recommend shares in which he has a holding. The only restriction imposed by the *Independent* is that he does not deal "within six weeks" of tipping a share. Some restriction! But what do you expect when the tainted ex-tycoon dictated the blurbs with which the not so *Independent* announced the return of the "legendary stock market guru".

And judging from Slater's first pick — medical technology group Amersham — *Independent* readers are hardly better protected than those of the *Sunday Telegraph*. Slater does not have to disclose how many shares he holds, when he bought them or at what price. Given that Amersham had risen since last year from 413p to 695p by the time Slater tipped them on 18 February such information is highly relevant. Nor is it made clear if Slater, an avid trader, has to inform readers when he sells one of his picks once the six weeks close season is over. A highly significant fact if he can capitalise on a fat profit while leaving readers still waiting for "the substantial upward move" he forecast.

Market watchers may also have noticed that Amersham performed surprisingly well against the trend ahead of the Slater column. On 16 February, against a big fall in prices generally, Amersham rose 11p to a peak 698p. The next day the shares eased 3p on an even-Steven day for the FT index. On both days it was one of the most traded stocks. After the Slater tip the price jumped 21p to 716p on a good day for the market. Now that rise was no doubt helped by the presentation on Amersham's prospects made to 35 institutions the day before Slater wrote. But that would not explain that initial 11p gain. To Slater watchers, however, it already sounds all too familiar.

HERE IS A financial health warning. The Fat Man is back. Alex Herbage has just been released from federal prison in Oakdale, Louisiana, after serving less than six of the 15 years he was sentenced to for the Caprimex fraud. Lock up your wallets for it's only a matter of time...

'Slicker'



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Alexei Sayle, Observer magazine

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AND...? PISS or get off the pot.

MARK THATCHER: Any interesting stories. All replies to Box 0214.

ELIZABETH MUGGERIDGE, agronomist, anyone know her current whereabouts? Box 0314.

CAPITAINE — loving you for "Take That". Sous-Fifre.

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CLARESKI — Happy Birthday. All my love, Jonathan.

AIDAN MCBRIDE, Sally has died and father very poorly. Please contact James on old telephone number or Box 0811.

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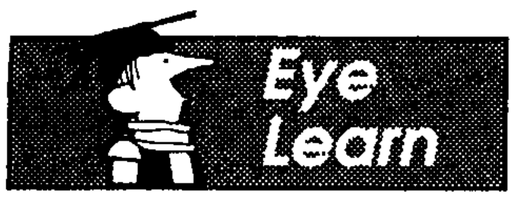

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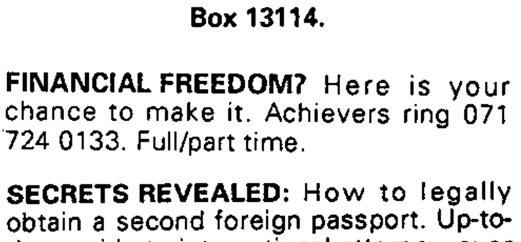

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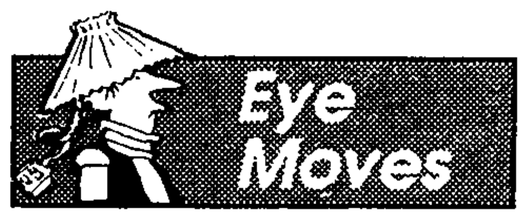

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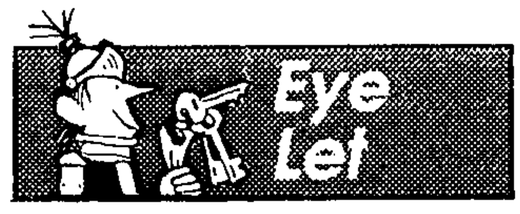

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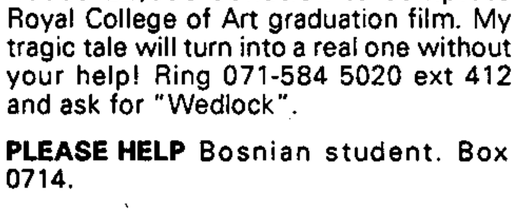

REDUNDANT, FAMILY to support. Donations? Loans? Needed urgently. Please help. Box 12014.

DESPERATE MUM with children. Repossession/debts. Donations please — to survive. Box 0514.

£25,000 WOULD FUND a three year project in Romania. Box 0614.

VERY TALENTED Italian film-maker needs £3,500 for Royal College of Art graduation film. Phone TIM or ANNA 071 584 5020 ext 336.

TAKE A GAMBLE. Help finance 2 young British film-makers in need of £5,000. Talented and ambitious. Contact CHARLES or GINA 071 584 5020 ext 336.

AMERICAN FILM student in London needs £2,000 donation to complete Royal College of Art graduation film. My tragic tale will turn into a real one without your help! Ring 071-584 5020 ext 412 and ask for "Wedlock".

PLEASE HELP Bosnian student. Box 0714.

DEEPLY IN LOVE couple need £7,500 to stay together and out of jail. Box 0814.

MILLIONAIRES! Your £1,000 will liberate British adventurer from Gulf. Also gets you friend for life and my story over drinks. Box 0914.

URGENT HELP needed for young man seeking £3,000 to set up children's entertainment business for schools, clubs, play schemes. Donations, grants, loans. Box 1014.

UNEMPLOYED MAN needs money bad. Can't have holiday or give girlfriend present. Please be generous! Thanks. Box 1114.

PLEASE HELP ME! Young creative man desperately needs £2,000. Box 1214.

STUDENT SEEKS funding for grand tour. Box 1314.

ORIGINAL PLAYWRIGHT. Cash disflow. Box 1414.

BE A PATRON of the arts! Published comedy writer needs sponsoring so he can abandon 9-5 drudgery and write full time. CV available. Box 1514.

MIDDLE-AGED CARER with blind eighty year old mother in desperate financial circumstances. Have lost my job, the house is being re-possessed and thousands are owed to people whose name ends in a vowel. I am going from desperate to suicidal. If there is anyone who has the compassion and generosity to help, I will send them one of my inventions in return for any reasonable donation. Box 1614.

"JE NE REGRETTE rien" — injection of cash needed to give life to once in a lifetime opportunity. £10,000 minimum. Box 12414.

ANGEL WANTED to fund preparation of book about Japanese POW victim. Reply in confidence. Telephone MR WEBB, 0708 641515 office.

ANTIPODEAN GIRL (25), a stunning scriptwriter, inventive, everywhere it counts, seeks a supportive foster parent during birth of new brain child. 071 723 6135.

PLEASE HELP. Medical student desperately needs funds to continue studies. All donations gratefully accepted. Thank you. Box 1713.

WOMEN STARTING OUT as comedy performers/writers wanted to form support group. Box 1714.

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BEAUTIFUL LATIN WOMEN desire friendship/correspondence. Mexico through S. America. LATINWORLD INTRODUCTIONS, 348 Danforth Ave., PO Box 65026, Toronto M4K 3Z2, Canada.

WORLDWIDE PENFRIENDS. Details from J. CROSBIE, 23 Mansefield, Grantshouse, Duns, Berwickshire TD11 3RN.

WANTED: TV quiz show contestants. Talkabout is back for series III... so we need talkative twosomes to talk about anything — could be blancmange, barnacles, Brazil... even Bolton — it doesn't matter what you say... just keep talking to win cash prizes! Interested? Please contact LOUISE or MICHELE on 071-412 0797 or 071-412 0400. Or write to TALKABOUT, PO Box 300, London WC1B 3PG.

HAVE YOU EVER been a Best Man? Do you have a story to tell? Radio Four producer wants to hear your experiences. Contact: Room 4058, BBC, Oxford Road, Manchester M60 1SJ. Tel: 061-200 2297.

ROOF EXPERIENCES? Live, work or visit one often? TV researcher wants to hear about it. Box 12114.

INDEPENDENT uncompromising woman, 40, seeks articulate, amusing, unattached man, 36-45, with a taste for living. London. Box 1814.

I WANT A MAN. No skinnies, new men or married gits need apply, but tall cuddly kind masterful Midlands/Northern men should. I am tall, blonde, 39, happy, gentle. Box 1914.

MARRIED MAN seeks non-fatal attraction for sexy suppers in the South-East or libidinous liaisons in London. Visual representation of respondent appreciated. Box 2014.

ATTRACTIVE GUY, 32, unhappily tied, seeks lady in similar position for romance. West Yorks/anywhere. Absolute discretion assured. Box 6113.

NOW AVAILABLE: Professional sportsman, 37, articulate, SoH, seeks lady for excellent food, wine, lust. Absolute discretion assured. Box 7414.

SCOTLAND, MALE 32, professional, enjoys art, travel, good food, politics, hillwalking, theatre, seeks like-minded redhaired female for friendship/long-term relationship, good conversationalist and SoH essential. Box 7514.

EVERYTHING BUT the girl: Single male, 32, own home, career, travel, social life. Missing that special woman to give it reason. Could it be you? Single, attractive, 25-35. Long letter and photograph would help. Box 7614.

STYLISH YOUNGISH slender widow with 11 year son seeks seriously silly, solvent, single, sensual man 40-55. Photograph and letter ensures reply. Box 7714.

TALL BLOND MALE, good looking, easy going, 44, City career, living Belgravia, wishes to meet a bright attractive shapely female, London based, for lively Ugandan discussions, maybe more. Photo appreciated. Box 7814.

YOUNG LADY just 40, divorced, small children, educated, intelligent, fun, desperate to quit smoking, in Windsor searching for 40+ prof. man 5'11"+ to love and feel secure with. Photo please. Box 10814.

CHARMER (55-85) anywhere? Hammersmith widower, 73, 5'9", erect, healthy, romantic, desolate. Box 10914.

GLAMOROUS CHELTENHAM lady (50s) seeks loyal part time younger guy (40+) for sexual flurries. Box 11014.

WITTY INTELLIGENT female (30), single, graduate professional, seeks male equivalent, 28-35, enjoys theatre, music, movies, for romance. Sense of humour essential. Staffordshire. Box 11114.

OLDER GENTLEMAN unattached, very experienced, would like teach much younger inexperienced female art of making beautiful love. Genuine. Utmost confidentiality assured. Box 11214.

LONDON BASED knight, 22¾, seeks a tall damsel to joust for. Box 11314.

TALL LEEDS professional man, 29, seeks elegant cultured slim single woman for mutual sparkle. Photo. Box 11414.

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GOOD LOOKING TALL slim professional male 42 seeks a warm educated curvy female, London. Photo please. Box 6213.

CUTE, ATTRACTIVE female, under 35, sought by kind, unconventional well-educated and travelled, n/s, 30s man. Can you ride pillion? London. Box 6313.

EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD-LOOKING, upmarket, educated tall attached American male, 45, seeks genuinely attractive married woman for very safe very discreet relationship, mostly daytime. London. Box 6413.

TALL MALE GRADUATE 32 with dark hair and blue eyes, who enjoys conversation, cinema and theatre, seeks lady for fun and romance. London/Herts. Box 11514.

SOCIOLOGIST (M,24) seeks sensitive girlfriend. Box 11614.

ATTRACTIVE SLIM caring 40s executive seeks lady (25-40) to love. Any status. Romance guaranteed. All answered. Genuine. Box 11714.

RELUCTANTLY SUCCESSFUL marketing man in rural East Anglia, enjoying regular London visits. Interests include food, antiques, period homes, boats and the sea. In my early forties, amusing and slightly eccentric, I want a partner to share an improved quality of life in the 90s. Box 11814.

SAD OLD WIDOWER, perilously close to 30, PhD, fully house-trained and unhealthily fond of only son (5) needs sensitive lady to share his life. All enquiries answered — photos appreciated. South Kensington, 3 bed, Y-reg Chevette. Box 11914.

JUSTIN THOMSON seeks woman, preferably alive, ono. Box 12814.

SOUTH OF OXFORD, male, 26, seeks woman under 30 into alternative music, hillwalking, the arts, love and peace. Box 8514.

ABERDEEN MAN — 25 seeks similar graduate female with open mind and sense of humour. There must be one!! Interested? Send telephone number. Box 8614.

MAGGIE SMITH needs Sean Connery/Clive Anderson. N. Wales, Cheshire, anywhere. Box 8714.

JERSEY BLONDE, beautiful, young, single, professional girl with streak of adventure needs romantic genuine intelligent boyfriend, 25-40 years. Box 8814.

CULTURED CHELTENHAM lady (45) intelligent/lively n/s seeks active male counterpart. Teetotallers need not apply. Photograph appreciated. Box 8914.

DESIRABLE SLIM elegant lady, wholesome, unashamedly 40 something wishes to meet intelligent respectable mature gentleman. Box 9014.

CONTINENTAL WOMEN make good wives. Beautiful femme 30s. Challenge me! Box 9114.

WOMAN, BLONDE, 33, trainee eccentric, seeks caring witty solvent man 28-35, no crimplene trousers. Box 9214.

WOULD MAUREEN who replied to Box 3606 (November 1992) please reply again with address (phone not ringing). Box 9314.

MARRIED MAN living in Ireland, accomplished and successful, needs to meet up with a naughty uninhibited lady for further life development. Long letter and photo welcome. Box 9414.

E. MIDLANDS LADY required, 35ish, to join me in indoor/outdoor activities. Must be good working order! Am 45, divorced; great: SoH, bum, cook. Not necessarily that order. Photos please. Box 9514.

MALE, 33, SEEKS curvy thing with tight skirt and stockings. Midlands. Box 9614.

MARRIED LADY — 50s — seeks affair. S. Gloucs. Box 9714.

UNATTACHED PROFESSIONAL male, 6'2", slim, fit and virile, 42, easy going and intelligent, with healthy interest in straight — or straightish — sex, seeks sensual, slimmish female, 18-40, with SoH, for lasting relationship, not necessarily serious. London based. Box 9814.

ATTRACTIVE WI female (32) feeling broody seeks sincere male for lasting relationship. Christian values, SoH, n/s essential (London). Box 9914.

PRIVATELY-EDUCATED damn cute, bottle-blonde female artist, 42, 5'8", slim, smoker, drinker: seeks clever man. Box 10014.

UNATTACHED HANDSOME 35 years young black chartered accountant seeks pretty female blonde or brunette for love friendship and possibly more. London/anywhere. Box 10114.

ENGLISHMAN, SOLVENT professional, attractive, wishes to meet Asian or Oriental lady under 45 for friendship and possibly romance. Photo appreciated. Box 10214.

SLIM BLONDE singer/scribe, 28, suffocating in Suffolk, seeks interesting older man (Suffolk/London). Box 10314.

JAZZ LOVING Cambridge undegraduate M/21, feeling "blue" seeks soul mate. Box 10414.

ATTRACTIVE WOMAN (39), blonde slim professional humorous educated, seeks tall caring male (35-45) for interesting witty conversation, long walks, w/dining, pub quizzes. Photos please. London. Box 10514.

BLONDE PREFERS gentlemen. 30-something American indepedent businesswoman fed up with British reserve interested in pretty boy and/or cute Jewish guy. Photo/phone essential. Box 10614.

FIT MALE student seeks older woman for discreet relationship. Box 12914.

BLITHE SPIRIT, 29, lovable, intelligent and undeniably surreal seeks Bill Murray lookalike for romantic ghostbusting evenings. Wacky sense of humour essential, love of films preferred and optimism nonnegotiable. London/S. East area. Box 2114.

LADIES BE SHARP, be natural — make discreet close harmony with mature, mellow, horn-player for mutual pleasure. Edinburgh. Box 2214.

WOMAN, 41, quite good-looking and reasonably bright, would like to meet similar, unpretentious man (London/Surrey). Box 2314.

DISTRESSED TIED lady 38 seeks psychiatrist's couch (Central). Box 2414.

ATTRACTIVE PROFESSIONAL female, single, thirties, seeks single n/s caring male, 30-40, 5'10"+, doctor, lawyer or similar professional for lasting relationship. Photo appreciated, returned. Nottingham and surrounding area. No left wingers please. Box 2514.

ELIGIBLE BACHELOR, 31, tall, strong, handsome, kind, wealthy and humorous, seeks pretty blonde well-educated girlfriend, 18-24 (please send photo). London. Box 2614.

STUFF MY BRILLIANT career: what's happening to my life? Attractive, educated brunette, 37, with weird job, needs fit, funny, outgoing man to help it all make sense. South/Southwest. Box 2714.

THIRTYSOMETHING professional attractive outgoing and caring female, London based, seeks the same in a gentleman. Box 2814.

ATTRACTIVE WOMAN, 39, demanding work, seeks mature, intelligent man, preferably with style and humour to explore possibilities. Interests include classical music, opera, psychoanalysis, books, food, wine and good conversation. London. Box 2914.

ARCHITECTURAL ARTIST, 6'2", n/s, 40, ideals intact but in need of new inspiration, seeks romantic muse (musical?) ideally with mermaid tresses, to draw out the love and laughter in him, share the good things of life, argue ideas, and make things happen. Try your quest on me? (Cambridge/London — and Venice in spirit). Box 3014.

DELIGHTFULLY ATTRACTIVE female PhD student seeks non-psychotic single Cambridge male (25-35). Box 3114.

CHARMING SCOUNDREL, tall, handsome, chic, seeks elegant lady for epicureanism, excitement, intrigue. Box 3214.

CARING MAN, intelligent, artistic, 30, Pythonesque sense of humour, seeks woman for warmth and romance. ALA. Box 3314.

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GREAT BLOKE seeks gorgeous girl who's missing out on affection. Photo please. Box 10714.

SUCCESSFUL ATTACHED company director, generous, extravagant, seeks lady based in Glasgow, West coast, or Edinburgh for intense mutually satisfying relationship. Letter with phone number please. Box 3414.

EXPATRIATE (28) seeks bright attractive outdoor n/s 20s female for correspondence and whatever develops. Box 3514.

MALE, 27, quiet, intelligent, thoughtful, witty, shy, introvert, seeks similar female for companionship. Looks not important but personality most certainly is! Box 3614.

LONDON MAN, late thirties, successful, good-looking, etc., but unhappily married, seeks lady in similar position for very discreet encounters, initially for friendship and later for perhaps more. Age not important but looks and style are. Phone appreciated. Box 13014.

JUST SURFACING. Attractive, tall graduate entrepreneur, male 34, materially very successful, slightly bohemian/musical, unpretentious, sincere, seeks feminine, slim, bright female under 30 (who wouldn't normally consider answering advertisements) for friendship and hopefully more. Midlands/anywhere. Photograph/telephone appreciated. Box 6912.

PROFESSIONAL SMART guy seeks classy lady 25-40. Perhaps we could become best friends forever. East Midlands. Box 4114.

COMPLEX CHARACTER, 25, lonely but vaguely contented, needs woman in life. Cambridge graduate, own house, professional (S/SW), into music (Genesis, U2, Levellers). Genuine soul mates only. Box 4214.

MILLIONS WAKE UP to me. Professionally-titillated, libido-comatised London woman journalist stunner needs one-in-a-million superman (30s) for urgent resuscitation. Box 3714.

MODEL WITH BRAINS (or similar) wanted by successful single London lawyer, 38, who aims high in life. Photo and telephone number appreciated. Box 3814.

THOROUGHBRED MARE, 29, seeks stable lad to pat nose and feed sugar lumps. London. Box 3914.

VERY ATTRACTIVE petite lady seeks extremely good-looking, witty male 24-32, for lasting relationship: must be sincere. NW area. Box 4014.

HONOURABLE SOUTHAMPTON Batyouth seeks Catwoman/Madonna! Box 4514.

SHY SCIENTIST, 28, 5'8", ex-Cambridge, literate, opinionated, ugly but harmless, seeks Elizabeth Bennett to draw him out. Photo appreciated. Box 4614.

INTELLIGENT, ATTRACTIVE well-rounded woman seeks accompany cultured well-educated person on holiday/retirement. Box 4314.

BROADMINDED BUT inexperienced lady, thirties, tired of being good, seeks gentleman under 40 to explore alternative. No questions, ties or limits. Box 4414.

LONDON LAWYER, 30s, male, maritally marooned, seeks Camilla-like confidante 28-45 for lunchtime liaisons and friendship, emotional and physical. Absolute discretion assured. Box 4714.

SLIM FAIRLY attractive but sexually inexperienced male, 32, seeks female(s) 18 to 50, to teach him the art of lovemaking. Can travel. Box 4814.

DO SEXY, MATURE women really answer these ads? I'm a teacher, 36, single and missing a sensual, loving relationship with an elegant lady. You? Box 4914.

GRADUATE MALE, 33, 6', goodlooking, married, seeks slim bookish lady 45-55 for long-term part-time relationship. Phone/photo please. Box 5014.

ATTRACTIVE PROFESSIONAL woman, 42, warm, interesting and vivacious, seeks similar man with varied interests. Box 5114.

29 BUT FAR FROM thirtysomething male, sucker for big smiles, hugs, etc, seeks similar female for fun friendship. Photo please. London/Kent. Box 5214.

DOCTOR, SOMERSET area, 35, prefers blondes with Porsches. Box 6014.

HANDSOME GRADUATE, 30, desires wealthy temptress. Box 5514.

ATTRACTIVE INDEPENDENT professional woman with a sense of adventure and a taste for the alternative seeks intelligent man to share the good things in life. Box 5414.

HANDSOME NORTHERN git, 28, London, needs ravishing n/s lass to cheer him up. Box 5614.

TWO ATTRACTIVE professional fun loving girls, mid 20s, with already good social life would love to hear from similar males 27-37. Sense of humour a must. London based. Photo. Box 5714.

MALE, 45, TALL good-looking, fit, n/s, professional, married, loves travel, arts — seeks female for sincere friendship and good times. Photo helpful, discretion assured. Box 5814.

NEED SPACE but sharing too? Full life but something's missing? If you're male, forties, articulate, can laugh and be friends if chemistry wrong, write/photo please, Box 5914.

GENTLEMAN 45 living France needs exclusive girlfriend to spoil something rotten on his frequent visits to London. Box 5314.

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TWO DASHING blades festooned in Bosnian blood, sweat and shrapnel, require Florence Nightingales to nurse them back to health. Box 12514.

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CAVALRY CAPTAINS seek flirtatious fillies to ease Bosnian blues. 9th/12th Lancers, BFPO 544.

GULF BOUND RAF officer (28) wishes to correspond with single, independent career minded female. Wining and dining on return. Box 12714.

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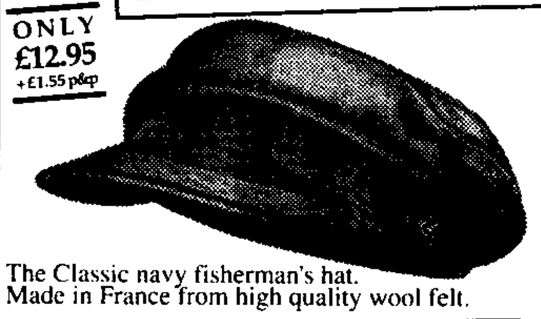

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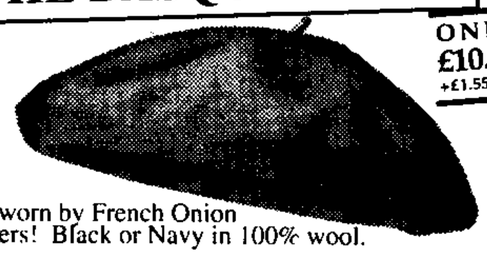

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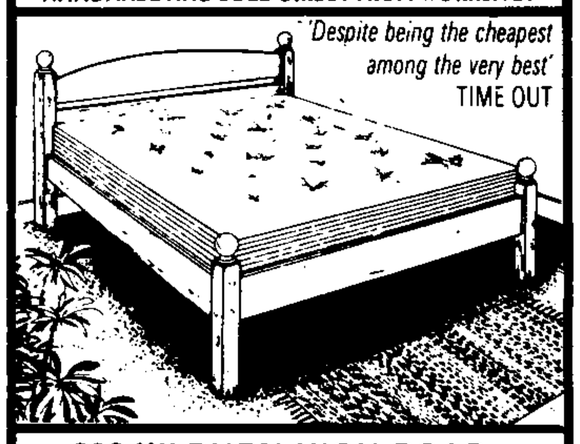

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ONE MINUTE WONDER! (my recording, what else!). Attractive man, 33, good sense of humour, seeks slim, smart, sophisticated, silk scarf wearing lady, for relationship. Ring 0839 514012

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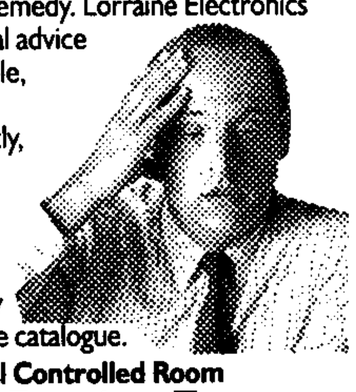

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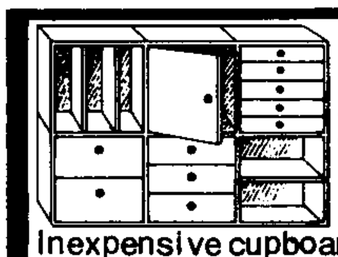

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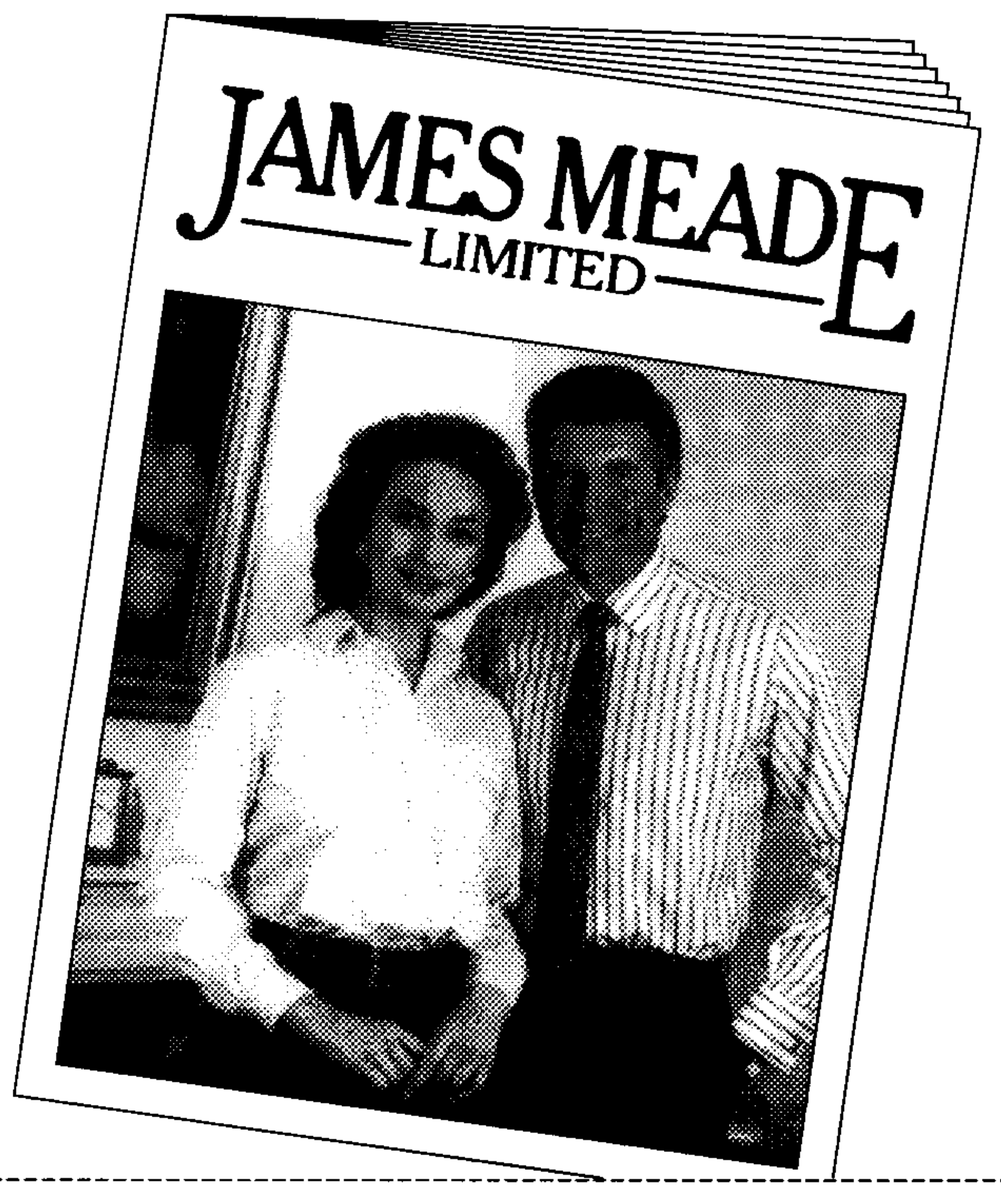

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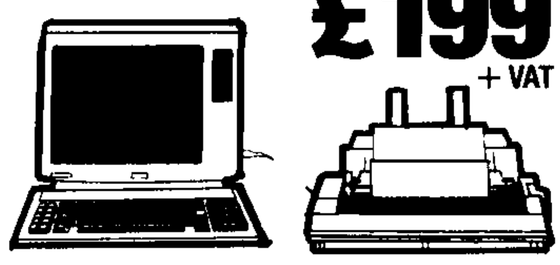

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